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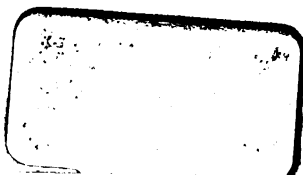
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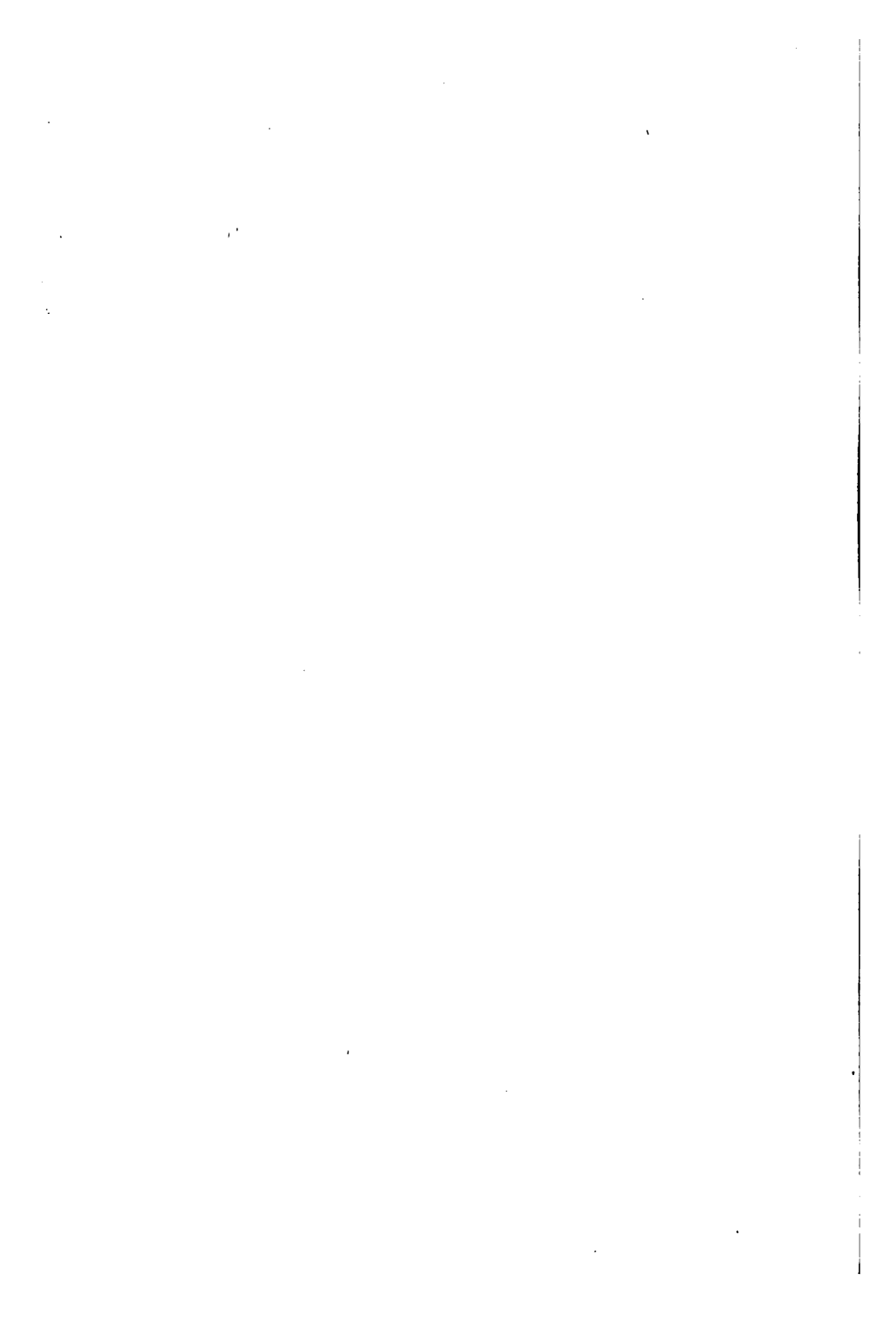
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THE MINGLED YARN.

A MELODRAMA WITHOUT A VILLAIN.

THE MINGLED YARN.

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

ROBERT BLATCHFORD.

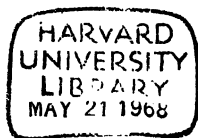
Life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together.—SHAKESPEARE.

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LIST OF CHARACTERS.

Sir JAMES GRINDROD, J.P. . . .	}	
Dr. WEEKS: a retired Physician	}	Colliery Proprietors.
Alderman PASKER, J.P. . . .	}	
ARTHUR GRINDROD		Son of Sir Jas. Grindrod.
CHARLIE WEEKS		Son of Dr. Weeks.
BILL BRADSHAW, S.D.F. . . .	}	Local Leaders of the Colliers.
GEORGE BILLAM, I.L.P. . . .	}	
TOM TRUDGE		a Tramp.
Sergeant HARDSTONE	}	Soldiers.
Private TERENCE O'FLAHERTY	}	
Private BENJAMIN BOBEL	}	
Private WILLIE GREEN	}	
WATERS		a Man-servant.
Mrs. BLENKIRON		a Miner's Wife.
ROSE BRADSHAW { Board School Teacher }		Daughter of Bill Bradshaw.
MARTHA BILLAM		Wife of George Billam.

A CORPORAL, COLLIERS, MINERS, &c., &c.

Subject of the Play: A great Lock-out in the Coal Trade.

Period of the Play: The Winter of 1899.

Locality of the Play: Mirksbridge, West Riding of York.

LIST OF SCENES.

Act I.—A Room in Broadmaine Hall.

Act II., Sc. 1.—The Cross Roads near Mirksbridge.

Sc. 2.—A Lane near Mirksbridge.

Sc. 3.—Living-room in George Billam's Cottage.

Act III., Sc. 1.—Office at Broadmaine Pits.

Sc. 2.—Broadmaine Beck.

Act IV.—Interior of George Billam's Cottage (as in Act II.)

Act V., Sc. 1.—A Hut at Broadmaine Pits.

Sc. 2.—A Room in Broadmaine Hall (as in Act I.)

Sc. 3.—A Hut at Broadmaine Pits (as in Sc. 1, Act V.)

THE MINGLED YARN.

ACT I.

SCENE.

A ROOM IN BROADMAINE HALL, *near Mirksbridge, the residence of Sir Jas. Grindrod, J.P.*

Old-fashioned oak-panelled room. Large practical casement window, right in flat. Door (practical) left in flat. Conservatory door right u.e. Fire-place right, table and three arm-chairs opposite fire. Door left l.e., with screen before it, and arm-chair in front of screen.

Discovered :

SIR JAS. GRINDROD : *standing with back to fire reading "Times."*

ALDERMAN PASKER : *seated in chair in front of table.*

A clear frosty morning in October.

SIR JAS. : Prices are rising nicely, Alderman Pasker, considering that the lock-out is only in its third week.

PASKER : Most promising, Sir James, most promising. Do you expect anything to come of this conference with the men ?

SIR JAS. : No. The men are mulishly obdurate. So far the lock-out has been nothing more than a holiday excitement to them.

PASKER : Yes; a kind of prolonged bank-holiday fuddle. They are not yet hungry enough to listen to reason.

SIR JAS. : Oh! They will never listen to reason. They will have to be starved into submission.

PASKER: It's a pity they are so blind to their own interests; but when people's brains are in their stomachs, hunger is the only argument that tells. It will be hard lines for the women and children.

SIR JAS.: True. But, after all, that is no affair of ours. Their husbands and fathers should think of that. Our business is to sell coal, not to feed colliers.

PASKER: Very forcibly put. Do you think we can compel them to accept the whole twenty-five per cent. reduction?

SIR JAS.: We must stand out for it. Our stocks of coal are large; prices are rising, and—the winter promises to be severe.

[Enter ARTHUR GRINDROD and CHARLIE WEEKS,
door in flat.]

ARTHUR: Good-morning, father. Good-morning, Alderman Pasker.

(SIR JAS. and PASKER rise. SIR JAS. shakes ARTHUR affectionately by the hand.)

SIR JAS.: Good-morning, Arthur. I hope you slept well, after the ball, my dear boy.

ARTHUR: Like a watchman, thank you, father.

SIR JAS.: Have you made a good breakfast?

ARTHUR: Why, father; of course I have.

SIR JAS.: I had Julien down from London expressly on your account. I know how you like his dishes. Were the truffles all right?

ARTHUR: They were a dream, father. But you spoil me.

SIR JAS.: My dear boy! We must make you comfortable. Don't you find the double windows an improvement to your bedroom?

ARTHUR: Yes, father; but pray don't trouble about me. You are always thinking of other people's comfort. I don't need any coddling, really. Charlie, here, will think I'm a sap.

(CHARLIE comes down left.)

CHARLIE: Good-mornin', Sir James. I wish my gov'nor were half as anxious about me. Mornin', Alderman Pasker. Awfully jolly cold weather, don't you think? Feller wants an awful lot of exercise to keep alive. If a feller isn't ridin', or golfin', or boxin', or somethin', a feller feels like a snow man.

PASKER: When *I* was young, Mr. Weeks, *I* often felt like a snow boy. I took *my* exercise shovelling the snow off my master's steps.

CHARLIE: How horribly jolly. I suppose that's what gave you such a figure. (*Aside, to ARTHUR*): I say, Arthur, do you think your gov'nor would make a personal matter of it if I punched his coachman's head?

ARTHUR: Don't be an ass, Charlie.

CHARLIE: Oh! all serene. But I heard the cheeky beggar call me "the little masher with the window in his eye"; and I should like to put a shutter in *his* eye, awfully, don't you know.

(SIR JAS. takes ARTHUR's arm. They go up right.)

CHARLIE (*to PASKER*): I say, old chappie, look here! If you want to make a bit over the Liverpool Cup, put your money on "Dandy Dick." It's a snip.

PASKER: Mr. Weeks!

(PASKER puts up pince-nez, and regards CHARLIE sternly. CHARLIE puts up eye-glass, and stares at PASKER. PASKER walks solemnly and with dignity to right. CHARLIE goes up left, shaking with laughter. SIR JAMES and ARTHUR come down centre.)

SIR JAS.: No. Not the least hope of a settlement, Arthur. The men are resolved to fight "to the bitter end," as they call it.

ARTHUR: Poor fellows! It will be bitter enough, for them.

SIR JAS.: You are too magnanimous, Arthur.

PASKER: A failing of youth, Sir James. Business will cure that. Nothing like business for knocking the sentiment out of folk. Mr. Arthur will be another man when he gets into trade. Look at *me*.

(CHARLIE *puts up glass, and stares at PASKER.*)

[*Enter WATERS, door in flat.*]

WATERS: Doctor Weeks.

[*Enter DOCTOR WEEKS, door in flat.*]

WEEKS: Good-morning, Sir James. Good-morning, gentlemen, Well! Nothing happened? Lock-out still at a dead lock? No signs of a lucid interval, eh? Owners losing their trade, companies losing their dividends, men losing their wages, public losing its head, and everybody losing his temper, eh? Phew! What the country wants is more lunatic asylums.

SIR JAS.: Nonsense, Weeks! What can we do when the men are obstinate?

WEEKS: The men are obstinate, and the masters are firm. Eh? Firm? (*He takes snuff.*)

PASKER: We must hold out for our rights, Doctor Weeks.

WEEKS: Rights! My dear sir, in nine quarrels out of ten both sides are in the wrong.

PASKER: The men are misled by a parcel of paid agitators.

SIR JAS.: Ignorant demagogues, who have adopted mischief-making as a profession.

ARTHUR: Well, father, it isn't one of the liberal professions. They don't wax fat on it.

CHARLIE: Awful cads, those agitators, don't you know? We had a feller down at Cambridge on the agitato: kicked up an awful row. Windmilled his arms, cork-screwed his body, raised his voice, dropped his aitches; yawped, squawked, barked, cackled, and made an awful arss of himself. I hate an arss.

PASKER: Mountebanks, sir, mere mountebanks.

CHARLIE: Yaas! This feller said the House of Peers was next door to an idiot asylum.

SIR JAS.: Impertinent—er—scoundrel.

CHARLIE: Yaas; and Timmins of Trinity bawled out, "Don't abuse your neighbours." Aw, awfully smart of Timmins, don't you think?

PASKER: Would you believe it, that firebrand, Bill Bradshaw, said in one of his speeches here, that I was as wicked as the cities of the plain, and as ugly as the ten plagues of Egypt?

CHARLIE: Haw, haw, haw! Did he? How awfully good.

WEEKS: Charlie, don't be a fool.

CHARLIE: Beg pardon, gov'nor. That cad at Cambridge called us pampered poodles.

PASKER: Capital.

CHARLIE: Not at all funny. Aw, I offered to take him on, with or without the gloves, but—

WEEKS: Charles! you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

CHARLIE: What for, gov'nor? He could have given me a stone and a half.

WEEKS: If he could have given you a stone and a half of brains, you might have passed as a sensible man, Charlie. But now, my son, go and smoke a cigarette. That is the one thing you have learned to do properly.

CHARLIE: All right, gov'nor. I'm snubbed.

[Exeunt CHARLIE and ARTHUR into Conservatory.]

SIR JAS.: I suppose, Weeks, you think the men are not at all to blame?

WEEKS: No. But I think we *are* to blame.

SIR JAS.: Can we prevent the market from falling?

WEEKS: Not by under-cutting each other's contracts.

PASKER: Are we responsible for the effects of foreign competition?

WEEKS: Foreign competition? British humbug!

SIR JAS.: It's as demonstrable as a problem in Euclid. Under the iron law, reduced cost of production abroad entails——

WEEKS: Rats!

PASKER: The law of wages is like the law of gravity——

SIR JAS.: The theory is universally accepted. The trade accepts it; the public accept it——

WEEKS: But the colliers don't accept it.

PASKER: The Church indorses it.

SIR JAS.: The Press is with us, Liberal and Tory——

PASKER: The verdict is unanimous.

SIR JAS.: How do you explain this unanimity?

WEEKS: One touch of humbug makes the whole world kin.

SIR JAS: Humbug is an ugly word, Doctor Weeks.

WEEKS: Don't speak disrespectfully of the Equator,

Sir James. Humbug is like the dog in the copy-books: it is the friend of man. What says Shakespeare?

The quality of humbug is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes,
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest——

SIR JAS.: I wish you'd be serious, Weeks.

WEEKS: So I will. Look the facts in the eye. Clear your minds of cant. The masters are not bad fellows, but rather pig-headed, and on the make. The men are not bad fellows, but rather pig-headed, and on the make. Set two trains running in contrary directions on the same line; what happens? Both engine-drivers may be excellent fellows, but the result is—smash.

SIR JAS.: Well, what plan do you suggest?

WEEKS: Arbitration.

SIR JAS.: Time enough to arbitrate when we are beaten.

PASKER: Excellent, excellent. (*Seats himself at table and begins to write.*)

SIR JAS.: Besides, our Federation is not in favour——

WEEKS: Our Federation! What is our Federation? A body of bigoted Tories working on democratic lines: one fool one vote, and the majority rules the roost.

SIR JAS.: Anyhow, the majority is against arbitration.

WEEKS: It is a narrow majority. If we threw our votes and influence into the opposite scale, the balance would turn.

SIR JAS.: What should we gain by arbitration?

WEEKS : A working basis, and an honourable peace. Whereas by fighting we get stagnation, dislocation, starvation, desperation, retaliation, mortification, and, in the end——

SIR JAS. : In the end ?

WEEKS : Compromise.

[*Enter ARTHUR through Conservatory.*]

SIR JAS. : Well ?

WEEKS : Then why not compromise at the beginning and save trouble and cost ? Think of the women and children.

ARTHUR : That's what I feel, father ; if I may say so. Often when I was at Cambridge, at a wine party or a cricket match, I'd think of the poor fellows down the pit, working for me.

SIR JAS. : Working for you ? Working for themselves.

(*PASKER comes down right.*)

PASKER : Really, Mr. Arthur, you don't know these fellows. They are what they are because they have no efficient desire to rise. With industry and thrift they might prosper. Look at *me*. I was an errand boy, but thanks to industry and thrift and—in short, my own efforts, I have become a mine-owner, a J.P., and expect to be mayor of Mirksbridge next year.

ARTHUR : How interesting. I say, Alderman Pasker, how awkward it would be if all the men in Mirksbridge were like you.

PASKER : Awkward ! How ?

ARTHUR : Why, if all the men in Mirksbridge were like you, they would all succeed like you, and then there would be twenty thousand rich mine-owners ; and they would all be mayor of the same town.

WEEKS: Ha, ha, ha! Had you there, Pasker. That's Cambridge logic. Ha, ha, ha! Phew!

PASKER: Success in business has nothing to do with logic. Solomon said, "Seest thou a man diligent in business, he shall stand before princes."

WEEKS: But the princes will sit down. Phew!

SIR JAS.: To cut the matter short, here's my answer. I'm a Yorkshireman and a master. I shall fight—and fight to win.

ARTHUR: Well, father, you know best, of course. But I am sorry for the men.

PASKER: The men care nothing for us. Only a few days since that fellow Bradshaw advised the men to break into my provision shops and sack them.

ARTHUR: Bradshaw is bitter and violent, I know; but he has suffered a great deal in the past.

PASKER: My *dear*—Mr.—Arthur, you must *never* believe what these people tell you. When it comes to *lying*, they——

[Enter CHARLIE through Conservatory.]

ARTHUR (*hotly*): The lady who told me that is incapable of deceit.

CHARLIE: Halloo! Rats! Who's the damsel, Arthur? Not that pretty school teacher, Rose ——?

ARTHUR: Hold your tongue, you idiot.

SIR JAS.: Mr. Weeks! You forget yourself.

CHARLIE: Beg pardon, awfully. I'm snubbed again, don't you know. Was only guessin'; but I'll lay any gentleman six to four——

[Enter WATERS, door in flat.]

WATERS: The delicates of the men is houtside, Sir James.

SIR JAS.: Show them in.

[*Exeunt CHARLIE and ARTHUR through Conservatory, talking.*]

(SIR JAMES, DR. WEEKS, and PASKER *seat themselves at table. Re-enter* WATERS. *He shows in* BILLAM, BRADSHAW, *and six colliers. They advance with awkward diffidence, and stand grouped before table. Exit* WATERS.)

SIR JAS.: Now, men, what have you to say to us?

BILLAM: We'd like to hear first, sir, whether you've owt to say to us.

SIR JAS.: No. You asked for the meeting. It is for you to make proposals.

BILLAM: Well, sir, we only represent one district. But it's a big district, and we know th' influence you gentlemen have. So we thought to save trouble we'd ask you once more if you'd speak in favour of arbitration.

SIR JAS.: Why do you ask this?

BILLAM: Well, sir, we know what a lock-out means, and we're loth to see our childer clem.

PASKER: And not very eager to clem yourselves.

BILLAM: No, sir, we're not. But we've stood it before, and we can stand it again. Eh, lads?

DELEGATES: Oi!

SIR JAS.: Are you prepared to consider our demand for a reduction?

BRADSHAW: Not we. Are we, lads?

DELEGATES: Nooa!

BILLAM: Don't be so chuff, Bill. Civility costs nowt. You see, sir, we cannot consider that. It's a matter for the Miners' Federation.

SIR JAS.: You men always leave the management of your affairs to outsiders.

BRADSHAW: That's what I keep tellin' 'em. But they're short o' wit.

SIR JAS.: Still I hope that even you, Bradshaw, have wit enough to understand that when prices are falling wages must fall.

BRADSHAW: I've too much wit to believe it. If one must follow the other, let prices follow wages. Labour produces t' wealth, let labour have first cut at it. Eh, lads?

DELEGATES: Oi!

SIR JAS.: Nonsense. How often has it to be proved that it is capital and not labour that produces wealth?

BRADSHAW (*showing his hands*): If capital produces t' wealth, how comes labour wi' segs on its 'ands?

PASKER: Labour has harder segs on its head.

BRADSHAW (*turning to DELEGATES*): Dost hear him, lads? How often have I told yo' t' same thing?

BILLAM: Don't argue, Bill. What's t' use o' arguing? We know wheer t' coal cooms fro', an' who gets it. T' question is whet's to be done wi' t' brass, net who earns it. We have nothing to propose, sir, only to ask you to speak for arbitration. What do you say, lads?

DELEGATES: Oi!

PASKER: There have been several disgraceful scenes, almost bordering on riot, and at least one attempt at incendiarism. Do you countenance that?

BILLAM: It was nothing serious, and colliers are not always wise nor always gentle, any more than the police are. But I'm against all violence. Eh, lads?

(DELEGATES *are silent.*)

PASKER : Ah ! Billam, your chorus does not sing to that tune.

[Enter ARTHUR and CHARLIE through Conservatory. They cross behind DELEGATES.]

BRADSHAW : It's cold weather, and if the workers choose to warm their hands by burning what they've built, I say more power to 'em.

CHARLIE : Aw, yaas, naturally, old chappie. But would you say the same thing if they cut off your whiskers to make a torch ?

SIR JAS. : Mr. Weeks !

WEEKS : Charles, leave the room.

CHARLIE : All right, gov'nor, I apologise. But if the gentleman with the side-lights feels aggrieved——

ARTHUR : Do dry up, Charlie.

CHARLIE (*CHARLIE moves towards door*) : Or if any other member of the horny-handed minstrel troupe feels hurt by any remarks of mine——

WEEKS : Do you hear, sir ? Leave the room.

CHARLIE (*pausing at door in flat*) : I shall be horribly delighted to give satisfaction—with or without the gloves.

[Exit door in flat.

WEEKS : Mr. Billam, I apologise for my son, and I promise to do my best in favour of arbitration.

[Enter WATERS with telegram, which he hands to Sir James, and exit.]

BRADSHAW : What we want is justice.

BILLAM : Nay. We weren't instructed to ask for so much as that. Masters are men, and miners are men, and we cannot expect either to be angels. Let us deal as between man and man. To save suffering and loss,

and to prevent ill-feeling, we offer to submit this dispute to a third party. Eh, lads?

DELEGATES: Oi!

WEEKS: Now, Sir James, what do you say? Billam speaks sense, and in the name of sense and humanity——

SIR JAS. (*opening telegram*): H'm! Well (*aside to WEEKS*), we may consider it later. (*Glances at telegram. Rings bell, and turns abruptly to BILLAM.*) Is that all you have to say?

BILLAM: That's all, sir. Eh, lads?

DELEGATES: Oi!

[*Enter SERVANT.*]

SIR JAMES: Very well, your proposal is rejected.

BRADSHAW: What?

SIR JAS.: The masters decline to consider your suggestion. The conference is over.

(*WATERS opens door. DELEGATES move slowly off.*)

BRADSHAW (*pausing in doorway*): Th' conference is over, but t' lock-aht isn't over. I knowed afore I coom whet th' end would be, an' why! Yo' went to sell yo're coals at a high figure. Mind as yo dooant sell 'em too dear.

[*Exeunt DELEGATES.*]

WEEKS: What do you mean, Grindrod?

SIR JAS. (*reads telegram*): "The Welsh miners have come out on strike. Accept no overtures. Secretary Masters' Federation."

WEEKS: That explains your abruptness.

SIR JAS.: Of course. There is the order. You see, with the Welsh pits closed, we shall have no competition, and may clear our stocks at famine prices.

WEEKS: And make a pile out of the poor old public—on principle. It's a bad business. Phew!

PASKER: I call it very good business.

[Enter CHARLIE and ARTHUR through Conservatory.]

SIR JAS.: As reasonable men, we have no other course.

WEEKS: I'm confoundedly sorry to see this. It's a blunder. It's a crime——

SIR JAS.: We are not so black as you paint us, Weeks.

WEEKS: There are no blacks and no whites in human nature. We are all greys.

PASKER: This is a new philosophy, Doctor Weeks.

WEEKS: It is an old truth. In real life dramas there is no heavy villain: our heroes provide us with enough of trouble and sorrow for our own use.

SIR JAS.: What *do* you mean, Weeks?

WEEKS: I mean that most of the mischief of the world is wrought by high-minded, pig-headed, honourable men. Yes, yes. Phew! Set a parcel of stupid, well-meaning, respectable British citizens to play the game of cross-purposes, and you'll have a hell-broth such as no witches have the skill to mix. Phew! I tell you it's a bad business. For the sake of a little dirty profit, or a little dirty pride, we are plunging half a million of men into industrial civil war. And we deserve to get licked. There! And I hope we shall get licked. There! And now I've said my say. (*Going towards door in flat.*)

SIR JAS.: No. But, my dear Weeks——

(ARTHUR and CHARLIE come down centre.)

WEEKS: Not a word. Phew! I'm off.

SIR JAS. (*Following him. PASKER standing before fire*): But; listen——

WEEKS: I won't. There! Phew! Heaven grant us more sense—or more asylums.

[Exit WEEKS.]

. CHARLIE: No. But, I say, Arthur. Who *is* the damsel? Not old Bradshaw's daughter, is she?

(ARTHUR *turns angrily*. CHARLIE *spars up, laughing*.
SIR JAS. *at door looking after* DR. WEEKS. PASKER *at fire smiling*.)

[ACT DROP.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

THE CROSS ROADS NEAR MIRKSBRIDGE.

High bank and hedge left centre. Sign post at end of bank nearest centre. Clump of trees right.

TOM TRUDGE, *discovered, sitting on stone on bank left, his bundle at his feet.*

TRUDGE: Well, 'ere's Tom Trudge, back again to Mirksbridge, arter many rovin' years. I were young an' hinnercent when I went away. Now I'm neither. I've 'oofed it some thousands o' miles since then, an' been put to some queer shifts to get a livin'—even 'ad to work sometimes. I've been down South so long I'm a South o' Hengland man in everythink—till it comes to suppin' ale, an' then I'm real Yorkshire.

[*Enter ALDERMAN PASKER, right.*]

TRUDGE: 'Ullo! 'ere's a Yorkshire bite; wanderin' at large without a muzzle. Well, they do make some queer sorts down this way. (*To PASKER*): Mornin', mister. Got a match?

PASKER: Eh? A match? Yes. (*He gives TRUDGE a match. TRUDGE takes it without rising.*) Here is a match; but—

TRUDGE: Thankee, mister. *What* was you goin' to say?

PASKER: I was going to ask you why, on such a cold morning, you are sitting on that stone?

TRUDGE: To rest. (*He strikes match and lights pipe.*)

PASKER : But, have you no work ?

TRUDGE : No.

PASKER : Have you looked for any ?

TRUDGE : No.

PASKER : How is that ?

TRUDGE : For fear I might find it.

PASKER : That's cool. What trade are you ? You're not a collier.

TRUDGE : No. I'm a tramp.

PASKER : That's a poor trade : a very poor trade.

TRUDGE : I'm a poor man : a very poor man.

PASKER : But, I see you have some tobacco.

TRUDGE : Yes. Or I'd not be sittin' 'ere.

PASKER : What do you mean ?

TRUDGE : I should be hard at work.

PASKER : You would ?

TRUDGE : Yes ; seekin' 'bacca.

PASKER : I'm afraid you are an idle fellow.

TRUDGE : An' what are *you* a doin' just now ?

PASKER : That is my business.

TRUDGE : This is *my* business ; an' I'm tired.

PASKER : And where do you mean to sleep ?

TRUDGE : Dunno. I'm a stranger. Which is the *best* hotel ?

PASKER : There is one a mile from here might suit you. It has a capital stone-yard.

TRUDGE : Are you a Poor-law Guardian, mister ?

PASKER : Yes, I am.

TRUDGE : I guessed it, by yer whiskers.

PASKER : When did you last do any work ?

TRUDGE : I've no 'ead for dates. When did *you* do any ?

PASKER: You are a saucy fellow. Do you know who I am?

TRUDGE: I should take yer for a School Board hoffer by the silly questions yer axes; but yer don't seem class enough for that.

PASKER: I am Alderman Pasker, J.P., of Mirksbridge, colliery proprietor, flannel merchant, and gentleman.

TRUDGE: An' a good berth, too, if yer don't get drunk an' blew it. Gimme another lucifer.

PASKER: I will. But don't come before me on the bench to-morrow, or I may give you something else.

TRUDGE: Thankee. If I'm wantin' anythink in your line, you shall 'ave the horder. Where did you git them clothes?

PASKER: I bought them; and *paid* for them.

TRUDGE: *That's* a lie.

PASKER: *What?*

TRUDGE: You bought them clobber with brass what was earned by a lot o' mean-spirited fools as works for yer.

PASKER: Don't abuse your betters. My employés are all steady, industrious, and respectable people.

TRUDGE: O yus! They works so bloomin' 'ard cos they're so bloomin' fond on it; an' they lets you cop the profits cos they're so bloomin' fond o' *you*.

PASKER: They work because they—er—would rather earn an honest living than loaf or beg.

TRUDGE: There's no accountin' for tastes. But a friend o' mine told me as they works cos they're too cowardly to run a risk, or too fat-headed to tumble to your little game.

PASKER: They're not idle by nature; like you.

TRUDGE: Nor yet idle by profession, like you.

PASKER: Idle! I'd have you know that I began behind the counter, and worked my way up. I'm a self-made man, sir; a self-made man.

TRUDGE: I guessed that as soon as I seed yer corporation. Gawd never made a thing like that.

PASKER: Don't try to be smart. I mean that I rose to my present position by my own efforts.

TRUDGE: So did I, guv'ner; but I don't brag about it.

PASKER: You have nothing to brag about.

TRUDGE: True. Very true. It's the ways o' Providence. If I'd been mean enough I might 'a' been a halderman; if you'd been man enough you might 'a' been a tramp.

PASKER: You've an odd idea of manhood.

TRUDGE (*rising*): Have I? My father 'ad a fair idea. Look at me. What price *this* for a bit o' form?

PASKER: Certainly you are big enough to earn your own living.

TRUDGE: You old grampus. Only that I've taken a fancy to yer, I'd dump yer into the ditch an'—sit on yer.

PASKER: You insolent vagabond. If I——

TRUDGE: Now, don't say that, 'cos yer don't mean it. I'm a fine man, an' yer admires me. 'Cos yer can't 'elp it. Gimme another lucifer.

PASKER: I must say you amuse me. You are a strange fellow; and have a kind of wit. But I warn you, you'll come to no good.

TRUDGE: What a hold liar it is. I shall come to a pot o' ale in less than a pig's whisper.

PASKER: Ay. You're fond enough of drink, I'll warrant.

TRUDGE: Come, come, old figger; no humbug. *Your* nose aint a Band-o'-Hope pattern. 'Ow much wine did yer guzzle yesterday?

PASKER: What I drank I paid for. With my own money.

TRUDGE: Rats! You drank at the expense of a lot o' poor colliers, you old sponge.

PASKER: Now, don't be envious, my man.

TRUDGE: *Your* man? Who are yer callin' *your* man? I'm me own man: what you never was.

PASKER: If you ask my townsmen you will hear what I was, and what I am.

TRUDGE: I do believe as this old flannel-stretcher's *proud* of 'isself. Why, you fat caterpillar, if you was stripped an' set in the market for sale, do you think as anybody would choose you as wanted a *man*? What are yer good for?

PASKER: I am good for fifty thousand pounds.

TRUDGE: The money may be good for somethin', but you're good for nothin', unless it's gettin' *more* money, an' wastin' it on yer gouty old corpse.

PASKER: And what are *you* good for?

TRUDGE: I'm good for thirty year. I can walk fifty mile a day. I can bend a poker over my harm. I can carry a sack o' wheat up two flights o' stairs.

PASKER: It's a pity you don't use your strength.

TRUDGE: 'Ow am I to use it? To put more fat on your lazy ribs; or to knock all the wind out o' your wheezy old bellows?

PASKER: I see you are a violent fellow.

TRUDGE: No. I'm a heasiful feller. I never exerts myself more than I can 'elp. Not on purpose.

PASKER : What use are you in the world ?

TRUDGE : I'm Nature's haudience. I sits an' admires 'er 'andiwork. Nobody else 'as time.

PASKER : It would be a bad job if all your class were like you.

TRUDGE : It would be a bad job—for you. You'd precious soon 'ave to get a job at emptyin' ash-pits, you old sinner.

PASKER : How dare you ?

TRUDGE : Go 'ome. Go 'ome and pray, you patron-isin', purse-proud, pampered old pirate. I'm ashamed o' me country when I look at yer.'

PASKER : No more of your insolence. I'll put the police——

TRUDGE : Ha, ha, ha ! The perlice. Yes, you white-whiskered old footpad, you go about armed with a constable, jest the same as another thief carries a knuckle-duster.

PASKER : Do you know to whom you are talking ?

TRUDGE : Yus, yer washup. An' now go, yer washup, 'cos I've an engagement. D' ye 'ear ? Go 'ome, yer washup, an' sell some more flannel petticoats. Yah !

PASKER : You cheeky vagrant. Here's a shilling for you. (*Throws down a shilling.*)

TRUDGE : H'm ! It wasn't honestly come by, but I'd better take it. You'll only put it to a bad use if I refuse it.

(*He picks up shilling, tosses it, catches it, spits on it, and pockets it.*)

PASKER : This is too much. If I find you loafing about here when I return——

TRUDGE: You won't. I'm goin' to drink a pot o' ale, an' walk on to a clean town.

PASKER: You'll die with your boots on.

TRUDGE: You'll die with somebody else's shirt on.

PASKER: Dog.

TRUDGE: Hog.

(They cross over.)

PASKER *(aside)*: Strange character, that. He might have been a respectable citizen, if he'd been sent to the mill as a lad and taught to do useful work. As it is, he'll die in gaol. *[Exit PASKER, left.]*

TRUDGE *(aside)*: Rum old cuss. He might 'ave been a man if 'e'd been properly kicked. As it is, he'll die rich.

(Recrosses left, and picks up bundle.)

Well, now I'll go an' look up the Lock-outs an' the Socialists. I wonder whether our old S.D.F. branch still keeps its 'ead above water. I wonder whether old Bill Bradshaw's alive an' kickin'. But if 'e's alive 'e's sure to be kickin'. I'll bet 'e's not as fat as *that* is *(jerking thumb after PASKER)*, nor aint rose as 'igh. If ever Bill rises 'igh it'll be to drop low. Kck! *(makes signs of hanging.)* Well, I'll look 'em up. The old 'ands'll be glad to see Tom Trudge, an' this 'ere lock-out ought to be amusin'. *[Exit TRUDGE left.]*

[Enter ARTHUR GRINDROD right u.e. He stands looking after TRUDGE.]

ARTHUR: Queer customer, that. Looks like a victim to chronic unemployment. What we call a tramp. And yet: if the disease had been hereditary we should call him a gentleman. Anyhow, he's up to no good. And I'm afraid *I'm* up to no good either. At least, for a

master's son to be contriving accidental meetings with a collier's daughter doesn't look wise, though it may be honourable. Is it wise? It is not. But she is pretty. Is it honourable? It is not. But I love her. Ah, Rose, Rose, you are beautiful, and I love you. The rest counts for nothing. Here she comes.

[Enter ROSE BRADSHAW *left u.c.*]

ARTHUR (*raising his hat*): Good-morning, Miss Bradshaw.

ROSE: Good-morning, sir.

ARTHUR: Ah—I'm Arthur Grindrod. We have met at the school. But you'll hardly remember me.

ROSE: Indeed I do, Mr. Grindrod. You know you have been there so often.

ARTHUR: Eh? er—yes, I—the fact is, being a university man, I naturally take an interest in—in education, and that sort of thing.

ROSE: Naturally.

(*They remain silent and uneasy for a time. ROSE, who carries a basket and a newspaper, keeps folding and refolding the paper.*)

ARTHUR: It is awfully cold this morning, Miss Bradshaw.

ROSE: Yes. It is rather cold.

ARTHUR (*mopping his face*): It feels like snow.

ROSE: It does feel rather like snow.

ARTHUR (*coming closer*): Do you like the winter, Miss Bradshaw?

ROSE: Yes. Do you?

(*They look at each other steadfastly.*)

ARTHUR: Awfully. But I prefer spring.

ROSE: The autumn is nice, too.

ARTHUR: Yes, awfully nice. So's the summer, awfully jolly.

ROSE: Oh! the summer is best of all.

ARTHUR: Yes, when the—ah—buttercups, and—ah—poppies, and—ah—flowers are in bloom.

(ROSE drops her eyes and smiles. Then looks up, gaily.)

ROSE: And strawberries are cheap.

ARTHUR: And there's cricket in the papers.

ROSE: And cheap trips to Blackpool.

ARTHUR: And garden parties and picnics.

ROSE: And school holidays, and——(*Clock strikes One.*) Oh! there's the half-hour. I must go. Good-morning! Mr. Grindrod. (*Holding out her hand.*)

ARTHUR (*takes her hand and holds it*): Good-morning, Miss Bradshaw. I'm awfully glad to have met you. And to—ah—to know you hadn't quite forgotten me.

ROSE: How could I—— I mean how should I forget you? We don't have so many visitors at the school. (*A pause—ROSE tries to withdraw her hand.*) Do you remember the first time you called?

ARTHUR: Yes. Awfully well. It was a month ago.

ROSE: Three weeks last Monday. You picked up my duster for me.

ARTHUR: Oh, yes; so I did.

ROSE: And upset the ink.

ARTHUR: You need not have remembered *that*.

ROSE: You need not have spilt it. And the second time you called you brought a lovely bouquet of flowers—and gave them to the head-mistress.

(ROSE withdraws her hand.)

ARTHUR: She asked me for them. She did, really.

ROSE : Oh ! I'm so glad.

ARTHUR : *Are* you ?

ROSE : Yes—that you gave them to her. Poor Miss Williams is *so* fond of flowers. But please excuse me, Mr. Grindrod, I must really go.

ARTHUR : One moment, Miss Bradshaw. I—ah—I should like to say how much I regret this dispute between our people and yours.

ROSE : Is the fault with our people, Mr. Grindrod ?

ARTHUR : Oh, I didn't imply that. I only meant to say how awfully sorry I am ; and that I've done my best to make peace, and—ah—that sort of thing.

ROSE : I am *sure* you have.

ARTHUR : Thank you. Then you—ah—you don't quite hate me ?

ROSE : Oh, no ; I—I must go now, Mr. Grindrod. Good-bye. (*Bows.*)

ARTHUR (*raising his hat*): Good-bye. Ah—Miss Bradshaw—would you mind—shall I walk a little way with you ? Ah—so many rough people about, and—ah—that sort of thing.

ROSE : Thank you, Mr. Grindrod, but I have nothing to fear. You forget I am a collier's daughter. Besides, our roads are not the same ; yours goes to the hall mine to the cottage. Good-bye, sir.

(*During this speech they look at each other very earnestly.*

At end of speech ROSE curtsies slightly, and exit left l.e.)

ARTHUR (*looking after her*): "Our roads are not the same." No ! She is going straight ; but I——? If I were a better man ; if I didn't care for her so much, it would be easy to do right. If she cared more—or less—it would not be difficult to see the end. *Does she*

care? If she does——! Arthur, Arthur, you must run, run for dear life, and for something dearer. But you won't run, Arthur, God help you, you can't run. Oh, Rose! If you were a lady: if I were a—a *man*. If, if, if——? (*He stands perplexed, looking off left.*)

[SCENE CHANGES.]

SCENE 2.

A ROCKY CUTTING ON THE ROAD TO MIRKSBRIDGE.

Noise heard off left.

Enter party of colliers dragging in CHARLIE WEEKS, who is dressed in Yeomanry undress uniform. BRADSHAW leads the way.

BRADSHAW: Rush 'im along, lads, rush 'im along. We'll give 'im Yeomanry. Rush 'im along to t' canal.

COLLIERS: T' canal, t' canal.

CHARLIE (*struggling*): Here, I say, you fellows. Are you men?

BRADSHAW: Barnce 'im along, lads. On wi' 'im.

CHARLIE: Do you hear? I say, are you men? Are you Yorkshiremen? Call this fair play? Look here, I say. I'll fight any three of you: one down the other come on.

COLLIERS: T' canal, t' canal.

CHARLIE: Look here, then. I'll fight the best man among you for a quid.

A COLLIER: Lose 'im, lads. I'll tak 'im on.

BRADSHAW: Noa. We'll give 'im t' saame chance as 'is class gives us. We'll chuck 'im in, an 'let 'im sink or swim. Barnce 'im along.

(*Struggle. CHARLIE is dragged over right.*)

[*Enter ROSE left.*]

ROSE: Stop, there. What are you doing? For shame, men. Let that boy go. (*Colliers stand still.*)

CHARLIE: Boy! Damme, boy!

BRADSHAW: Goo on, goo on.

(*ROSE turns and recognises him.*)

ROSE: Father!

BRADSHAW (*looking away from her*): Thee get off home, lass. This is noa wark for women.

ROSE: Is it work for men? Let him go directly, men! (*She stamps her foot.*)

COLLIERS: Nooa!

ROSE: You shall. If you throw him into the water you shall throw me with him.

(*She runs to CHARLIE and puts her arm round his shoulders.*)

BRADSHAW (*stands irresolute and ashamed.*)

CHARLIE: Good business.

(*ROSE looks steadily at BRADSHAW. He shuffles his feet uneasily, and scratches his head.*)

BRADSHAW: We'd appen better let 'im gooa, lads, oi, let 'im gooa. (*Colliers release CHARLIE.*) Nah, lass, will that content thee?

ROSE: Not until you go away, father, and take these men with you.

BRADSHAW: All reight. Tha'll 'ave thee own rooad, I know. Coom on, chaps.

[*BRADSHAW and colliers exeunt slowly, left.*]

CHARLIE: I say, it's awfully good of you, miss, and awfully plucky, too, and I'm awfully obliged to you, don't you know. If it hadn't been for you I should

have come off badly amongst all those beastly cowards. Haw——

ROSE: They are not cowards. I know they were doing a cowardly thing, but they are not cowards.

CHARLIE: Beg pardon, awfully. But that's how it struck me, don't you know.

ROSE: I see you are in the Yeomanry, sir.

CHARLIE: Yaas!

ROSE: And do you think it is a very brave thing for gentlemen to go out on horseback with drawn swords against a crowd of unarmed colliers? I wish you good day, sir. *[Exit ROSE left.]*

CHARLIE: Now some fellers would have tried to kiss that girl. And I dessay I should have tried it myself, if she'd been some other girl. "It isn't a very brave thing to go on horseback with drawn swords against a crowd of unarmed colliers." That's what I call a knock-out. Haw! I never thought of that. I must ask the gov'nor about it.

(He begins to dust and smooth his dress.)

So that's Rose Bradshaw, is it? She's a devilish pretty girl, and it's devilish lucky for me that she's got such an obedient father. But it was a near squeak. Haw! If this lock-out lasts I'd better learn to swim.

(He picks up his cap and dusts it.)

Haw! "Rose." It's an awfully jolly name. I should call her "Rosie." Now, I wonder if there is anything between her and Arthur? Because Arthur mustn't play fast and loose with Rosie. Damme, no. Arthur's an awfully good feller, and means well. But it's the fellers that mean well that always play the devil, and that sort

of thing. Haw! I'll keep my eye on Arthur. He won't spoof me. I know somethin'.

(He lights a cigarette, pulls down his jacket, cocks his cap, and exit with military swagger, singing)—

Sweet little Rosie-posy,
Dressed in her Sunday clothesy,
Goodness only knowsy,
I love you.

[SCENE CHANGES.]

SCENE 3.

LIVING-ROOM IN BILLAM'S COTTAGE. *Door left in flat. Window right in flat, both practical. Entrance to staircase, going up a few steps with landing and handrail. Right. Fire-place right. Room fitted and furnished in comfortable working-class fashion. MARTHA discovered seated in rocking chair by fire, nursing baby, and singing lullaby.*

[Enter ROSE, door in flat.]

ROSE : Martha.

MARTHA : Hush ! Ahr Lily's just gotten asleep.

(ROSE comes down right.)

ROSE : How lovely she looks

MARTHA : There's no flower so bonny as a sleepin' child, nor so sweet as a waakin' one.

ROSE : How pretty the wee fingers are.

MARTHA : Ay, and whet power there is i' them wee fingers. It's t' touch o' them wee fingers clingin' to yore neck as chaanges a mother fro' a lass into a woman.

ROSE : Yes, dear.

MARTHA : Ay. A lass may be a poor speritless

thing hersel', but a lass wi' a baby at 'er breast will show t' courage of a lion.

ROSE : Yes, Martha, I understand.

MARTHA : Nay, lass, tha' nobbut partly understands. Tha' 'as to nurse a child o' thee very own afore tha' knows whet t' love o' childer is. It chaanges t' nature of a woman, does this motherhood. It chaanges t' look, an' t' seemin' of all t' world. A woman has ner lived until shoo's 'eard t' voice of her own child.

ROSE : The little creatures are very sweet, but——

MARTHA : But whet, Rose ?

ROSE : They bring anxiety, don't they, dear ?

MARTHA : Ay. Just as sunshine brings shadow, Rosie !

ROSE : Yes, dear.

MARTHA : Shoo's—shoo's but delicate, is ahr Lily, ahr darlin', an'—an' this lock-aht.

ROSE : It will soon end, Martha. It must end soon.

MARTHA : George doesn't think sooa. It's two months nah, sin' it started, an' we're nooan on us weel provided.

ROSE : We are better than some, dear.

MARTHA : Ay. But t' doctor says—says at ahr Lily's but frail, an' needs great care ; an' if t' lock-aht lasts, an' t' winter's as bitter as it threatens to be——

ROSE : Dear Martha, don't vex your heart with fears.

MARTHA : Nooa. But you know whet we've seen afore. An' ahr little Lily ! We wor wed five year, lass, afore shoo coom, an' if—if we lost her——

ROSE : Martha, you are tired, and over-anxious. Take the little pet to her bed, and we'll have a nice long comfortable talk.

MARTHA : I will, Rosie. Will ta oppen t' door ?

(ROSE rises and opens door at stair-head. MARTHA goes out through door. ROSE comes down right and kneels on hearth with her head rested on MARTHA'S chair.)

ROSE: She loves her baby very dearly. Can it be possible that she loves it more than I love—I mustn't say such things. I mustn't think them. Oh! why is he a rich man, and why am I a poor girl? There! I won't think of him any more. It is nothing but selfishness. Poor Martha. How she dreads this lock-out. He seemed sorry about it. He has a kind heart, I am sure. He must have with such a good face. They say he tried to persuade his father to compromise. If anyone could influence that stern old man, Arthur could. I mean Mr. Arthur. I wonder whether—if I——

[Enter MARTHA from stair door.]

MARTHA: Why, Rosie, lass, whet art a-studyin' abaht?

ROSE: I was thinking, love. Oh! I was thinking silly thoughts.

MARTHA (*sits down on chair*): Well?

ROSE: Martha, if there were something you desired very much, and if it were quite out of your reach, what would you do?

MARTHA: I'd do as workin' folk mun do. I'd do withaht it.

ROSE: But, Martha. Suppose it were a flower, and you loved it, and longed for it, and could not reach it, and must fall in trying to reach it, would you try, or go away and leave it for some one to snatch who would not prize it?

MARTHA: Why, Rosie, whet ails thee?

[Enter at door in flat BRADSHAW, TRUDGE, and a collier.]

ROSE: Hush, dear. It was only an idle fancy.

MARTHA: Good-evenin', Bradshaw, whet's t' news?

BRADSHAW: Whet's t' news? Why, t' public is buyin' coal at famine prices, t' maisters is pocketin' t' brass, an' t' newspapers is liggin' aw t' blaame on t' colliers. If I'd mah waay with them 'ard-faaced thieves i' t' maisters' federation, I'd— (*fiercely*).

ROSE: Now, don't get angry, father.

BRADSHAW (*angrily*): Angry? I'm *net* angry. But if I'd mah waay wi' them scaly, crawlin', hissins, sneakin', venomous reptiles as writes fer t' newspaapers, I'd put 'em to get 'ard rock in a narrer seeam at 50 per cent. off t' list price for twenty year. They're nowt but a pack o'—

ROSE: *Please*, father, be calm.

BRADSHAW (*furiously*): So I *am* calm. But when I think o' them newspaper knaaves, as is a heartless brainless gang o' paid perjurers an' cringin' toadies, an' 'ud stond up fer Owd Nick if they thought 'e'd advertise, I tell yo' I'd like to—

MARTHA: Nay, Bradshaw, it's net that. They'd net lie o' purpose, lad. They dooan't understond t' question, that's aw.

BRADSHAW: An' I 'spose, Sir Jaames Grindrod doosn't understond it noither. He's net tryin' to crush us, an' rob us, an' mak' slaaves on us—th' owd grey-headed respectable highway robber—net he. He doosn't understond it. 'E thinks as we'd live better an' enjoy ussens more wi' fifteen bob a week nor wi' a pahnd. If aw t' men were o' my mind, they'd tie th' owd bandit to a cart's taail, and—

ROSE: Well, well, father, don't argue. Ask Willie Greenwood to sing us a song.

MARTHA: Ay, that's better. Coom, Willie, lad.

WILLIE: Aw reight, if owd Trudge 'ere 'll play t' accompaniment on 'is fiddle.

TRUDGE: I'm there, Willie. Shall it be the good old song?

WILLIE and BRADSHAW: Oi!

(TRUDGE takes a fiddle out of a bag and plays a bar or two of "Marseillaise." WILLIE stands up to sing.)

MARTHA (rising): Oh no, Willie. Mr. Trudge, net that. Sing somethin' else.

BRADSHAW: An' *why* net that?

[Enter GEORGE BILLAM, door in flat.]

MARTHA: It's a dreadful, cruel song. It's sooa bloody and furious. It maakes me shudder. It's un-English. We have nowt to do wi' violence, and deeath. We believe i' love, net haate; i' peeace, net war. I cannot bear to hear ahr English Socialists sing that song.

BILLAM (coming down): Tha't reight, Martha. It's a savage song, an' aht o' plaace i' these daays. We went nooa guillotines here. We 'ave t' ballot, if we'd nobbut t' sense to use it.

(WILLIE GREENWOOD rises, shrugs his shoulders, and exit door in flat. TRUDGE crosses over left, sits down in a chair, and begins to fill his pipe.)

BRADSHAW: T' ballot? Will t' ballot give us wark, or breead? Will it stop t' Grindrod gang fro' lockin' us aht, or fro' sweatin' us when we're in? Will it bring back them six men as wer' killed i' Pasker's pit to ther' wives an' childer? Will it give me back me sister, or me wife; or mak' me young ageean, or 'appy? Ballot! I tell thee it's bayonets we went, net ballots. Ah'm

sick o' 'earin' yo' talk abaht peeace, and persuasion. Dos' ta' think tha can iver persuade Sir Jaames Grindrod to like Socialism? Tha'd as sooin persuade a tiger to turn vegetarian.

TRUDGE: 'Ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear!

ROSE: But why should Sir James hate Socialism, if we could convince him that it is just? He's an honourable man.

TRUDGE (*singing*): Sich a nice man, too,
Sich a werry nice man.

BRADSHAW: Socialism meean as it's every man's reight to wark, an' Sir Jaames 'll never consent to do that.

TRUDGE: I should say as Socialism means as it's every man's reight to eat.

MARTHA: Socialism meean as it's every man's reight to live, and it meean also as it's every man's duty to love.

(TRUDGE *draws up another chair with his foot, and puts his feet on it. He goes on smoking.*)

BRADSHAW: Love! Am I to love Grindrod? It's eeasy talkin'. It's eeasy to see as yo' 'aven't felt t' pinch. Wait until th' iron 'as entered into yo're souls; wait until yo've borne whet I've 'ad to bear, an' then let's see 'ow yo'll love th' scandrels as 'as robbed an' crucified yo'. Love! I went justice!

TRUDGE: An' all I want is a heasy life, an' plenty of it.

BRADSHAW: Yo' may love, an' yo' may forgive. I went justice. I went rogues punished an' rich idlers set to wark. I went to see a gang o' lazy lords on t' tread-

mill, an' a bunch o' fat bishops shovin' coal trollies i' t' low levels. I'd maaake 'em tup like rams.

BILLAM : It's revenge as thar't thinkin' on, net justice.

MARTHA : If tha'd been born i' Broadmaine Hall, tha'd 'a' been t' saame as Sir Jaames is. It's a paart o' justice to remember that.

ROSE : Cold justice by itself will not suffice. We must have love : the love that is of no sex, no nation, and no creed ; the love that is Christlike in its humanity and divinity, the love that hopes all, believes all, pardons all, and glorifies all.

BRADSHAW : Yo' two reads too much poetry.

ROSE : We love poetry. Besides life is so very prosy, father, and poetry helps us.

MARTHA : I wodn't like to give up me books. An' of aw t' books I'm t' fondest o' poetry.

TRUDGE : What we want is less poetry an' more pork.

BRADSHAW : I went justice ; and Socialism 'll give it to me.

MARTHA : Socialism meeans forgiveness, net revenge ; it meeans as t' many shall be lifted up, net as t' few shall be dragged dahn.

BRADSHAW : Then there's two kinds o' Socialism ?

ROSE : Yes, father ; your kind would make a gentleman into a collier, our kind would make a collier into a gentleman.

TRUDGE : 'Ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear, 'ear !

BRADSHAW : Poetry books ageean. Dost a' think tha' t baand to overcoom capitalists an' landlords wi' sich ideeas as them ? Tha mud as weel try to scare a pack o' wolves wi' throwin' snowballs at 'em.

BILLAM : Nay, Bradshaw——

BRADSHAW: It's reight. Capitalists is wild beeasts, an' as to be treated *as* such.

ROSE: Father, I am sure you are unjust. The rich are as good as the poor. They are as honest, and as gentle, and as sincere.

BRADSHAW: Tha' doesn't know 'em. They sacked me for leadin' a strike, an' kept me on t' tramp for two year. An' when I coom back, yo're mother wer' deead o' hunger, an' yo' an' ahr poor Lucy wer' i' t' workhase, an' a warrant aht agin me, fir desertin' yo. I tell thee, lass, they're wild beeasts. An', talk o' peeaceful measures—they'd shooit us dahn i' t' streets to-morrer if they dared.

TRUDGE: I beg to corroborate the statement of my honourable friend.

MARTHA: I don't believe it, Bradshaw, I can't believe it.

(Music heard off.)

BILLAM: Anger begets anger. Wrath turneth awaay soft answers. As long as we act fairly, an' keep t' peeace——

(Music heard nearer.)

TRUDGE: What's that?

[Enter HANNAH BLENKIRON, door in flat.]

BILLAM: Whet's up, Mrs. Blenkiron?

HANNAH: Whet's up? Why all t' tahn's up. Theer's some sowjers coom in.

MARTHA: Sowjers?

HANNAH: Oi! 'orse sowjers. King's own Huzzars, they caw' 'em. King's own huzzies, I saay. They're as smart as a passel o' show lasses. They're jackets looks as if they wor glued onto 'em, an' as fer their trahsers——!

MARTHA: Nay, Hannah——

HANNAH: Whet ails thee? Theer's a fat owd chap i' t' front on 'em wi' enough goold laace abaht 'im to trim a coffin, an' 'is legs as tight as polonies, an' 'is——

MARTHA: Nay, I saay——

HANNAH: It's reight; 'e looked at me as prahd as a bum-bailiff, an' I sez to 'im, "Hey, maister, did ta put 'em on over thee 'ead?"

BILLAM: What do sowjers went 'ere?

BRADSHAW: They're just coomin' to keep t' peeace.

[Exit BRADSHAW door in flat.]

BILLAM: This is bad.

HANNAH: Bad! Tha' should see 'em brarstin' an' thumpin' thro' t' streets wi' their impudent tramboons an' kettle-drums, saame as if t' tahn 'ad been built for them to staable their 'osses in. Nay, I wor nobbut lookin' an' a bobby gate 'owd o' me, an' sez 'e, "Stond back," 'e sez. "Nah, then," I sez, "who art pullin' and shovin' i' that rude waay, as if tha' wor a lord? Dost 'a think I'm bahnd to ate 'em raw?" I sez. "They look rare and fat," I sez, "if they'd been locked aht for handful o' fortnights they'd nooan went a shoe-'orn to get their trahsers——"

MARTHA: Do be quiet, Hannah.

(TRUDGE rises and goes out door in flat. ROSE goes to window and looks out.)

HANNAH: If I wor as quiet as thee, Martha Billam, for nobbut one daay, ahr Silas ud think ther' wor some-b'dy deead i' th' 'ase.

BILLAM: It would be like ten ahrs at t' seeaside for 'im, Mrs. Blenkiron.

HANNAH: He'd nooan like it. I remember I tried

sulkin' once, an' 'e sez, "For t' Lord's saake, Hannah, let it swing lose i' t' wind." "Let whet swing lose i' t' wind?" I sez. "Why," 'e sez, "thee jaw, lass. I cannot bide to have it still," 'e sez. "I feel as if I wor deef an' dumb."

BILLAM: I don't like this, Martha. I don't like it, lass.

MARTHA: But if t' men gives no provocation——

BILLAM: Ah! But it meean as t' lock-aht 's nobbut just begun. It meean as t' maisters intends 'oldin' aht.

MARTHA: Oh, George, ahr poor little Lily! Ahr baaby, lad!

ROSE: Is it true, George, that Sir James Grindrod holds the key of the position in his own hand?

BILLAM: It is true as 'e 'as great influence?

ROSE: If he could be persuaded to advocate arbitration, the other masters would give way.

BILLAM: I think so. I feel sure on it. But who can persuade him?

ROSE: I will.

BILLAM and MARTHA: Yo?

ROSE: I will try.

HANNAH: An' I'll 'elp thee, Rosie. By gow! lass, tha's 'it it. We'll 'ave a deputation o' women, and talk th' obstinate owd donkey's eead off. Men's no use at talkin'. When it's a caase o' gettin' coal, or suppin' aale, men's reight enew; but if there's owt to be said——

BILLAM: Tha'll say it, Hannah, if tha 'es to shaat it.

MARTHA: But when shall we go?

BILLAM: It's no use yo're goin'. He'll nooan listen to yo'.

(BRADSHAW *appears at door.*)

ROSE : But perhaps Mr. Arthur will help us.

MARTHA : Mr. Arthur ?

ROSE : Yes. I will try to persuade him to help us.
All the rich are not bad. Arthur Grindrod I am sure is
kind and true.

BRADSHAW : Rose !

ROSE : Father !

BRADSHAW : Never let me hear thee name that man's
name ageean.

ROSE : But, father——

BRADSHAW : Silence ! Hear what I tell thee, an'
obey it. If I ever catch 'im spakin' to thee, or thee to
'im, I'll shoot 'im like a dog.

ROSE : Father !

(BRADSHAW *holds up his arm as if to keep her back. Music
heard off.*)

[ACT DROP.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SIR JAMES GRINDROD'S PRIVATE OFFICE AT BROAD-MAINE PITS. *Door right in flat. Long office window centre in flat with view of tree tops through lower panes and sky above. Desk left. Door r.m.e.*

ARTHUR GRINDROD *discovered seated at desk, smoking a cigarette and casting up figures on foolscap sheets.*

ARTHUR (*casting up accounts*): Fifteen and twenty-five are forty; and seventeen, fifty-seven; and eleven, sixty-eight; and twenty-one, eighty-nine—(Oh, Rosie)—eighty-nine—eighty-nine; and eleven are a hundred—(God bless her)—and seven, and six, are thirteen: one hundred and thirteen tons at eleven-six-three-eighths, delivered in own carts, equals—(My darling)—equals—Oh! confound it. (*He turns round in chair.* (How can I check estimates, when there are more “Rosies” than shillings in one column, and more “darlings” than tons in the other column?—eleven and sixpence and three-eighths per ton. We can't cut it much finer. I wonder what the Slack and Rubble Company are quoting. They are our most dangerous rivals, for *this* contract. (*Smokes.*) What lovely eyes she has. They are the colour of an April sky. (*Smokes.*) N—o! No! They are too deep a blue for April—more like July. (*Smokes.*) N—o! No! They are too lustrous for July; the July sky is a sleepy sky. (*Smokes.*) June is about the thing. Yes: a fresh

June morning when the sky is intensely blue, and as bright as silk, and yet sweetly, dewily moist. Bah! dreaming again. (*Turns to desk, dips cigarette in ink, and seeing what he has done throws it away. Takes up another cigarette and turns to audience, holding cigarette in right hand and a letter and short lead pencil in left hand.*) Let's see what our agent says. (*Reads letter.*)

"Morgan's quality is a good shilling a ton better than ours, and his price is only ninepence higher." Hm! How are we to knock off that beastly threepence? There's the rub. (*He lays letter on desk and puts cigarette behind his ear.*) If I were sure she cared for me, or that she *didn't* care for me, my course would be clear. (*Takes out a match, strikes it, and holds it in his fingers.*) Still there need be no false steering with virtue for a compass always pointing one way. (*Throws match away.*) Virtue? H'm! (*Takes out another match.*) There are three kinds of virtuous folk: those who cannot, those who dare not, and those who will not. (*Strikes match.*) And those who will not may be subdivided into those who have been tempted, and those who haven't. (*Throws down match, and strikes another.*) For in this connection it holds good that every man is innocent until he's tried. (*Puts the short pencil in his mouth and tries to light it. Throws away match.*) If Rosie *didn't* care for me, I could be as virtuous as a fox in an empty hen-roost. (*Tries again to light pencil. Then throws it away.*) Damn these cigarettes! Yes. We are all honest until we see something worth stealing. No! (*He jumps up.*) Hang it, Arthur, don't play the devil's advocate. Don't lie to your own soul. You know what you ought to do, and *must* do. (*Crosses over right.*) But you are not so cock-

sure about what you *can* do. Bah! Where's that estimate? (*Goes back to desk and picks up estimate.*) There are three courses open: marriage, flight, and—— No, Arthur, there are but two courses possible to an honourable man. Well; why not marriage? I go to the governor (*he shudders*) and say: "Ah! by-the-way, father, I want to marry a collier's daughter. She's the dearest girl in the world. She's awfully pretty; she fears God and aspirates her aitches; she understands Shakespeare, the musical asses, and the use of the knife and fork, and she's—Bill Bradshaw's daughter." No! it wouldn't act. The governor would fly bang off the handle, and before I could say Jack Robinson I should find myself out in the cold world singing nobody's child—a kind of a demnition grass orphan.

On the other hand: Suppose I took French leave and married Rosie. And suppose the governor gave me his blessing, and the key of the street. How would *that* work—or, rather, how should *I* work? I couldn't work. I don't know anything, and can't do anything. I'm an ignorant educated man, and have been brought up to be ornamentally useless. Besides, I'm proud, extravagant, and lazy. Better go back to the estimate. (*He sits down, takes cigarette from behind his ear and tries to write with it. Throws cigarette away and rises, with estimate in his left hand.*) Love in a cottage would be all right if the cottage were a cottage *ornée*, and if the cottagers had more reason to fear the income-tax assessor than the rent collector. But love in an "up-and-downer," or a "back-to-backer," with Corydon in patched trousers, and the neat-handed Phyllis in debt to the greengrocer for the savoury messes—with the accent on the messes—

No! It's out of the question. It might have been done in the Golden Age, but it can't be done in the Age of Gold.

No! If I marry her we are *both* ruined. If I *don't* marry her——? (*During this speech he twists and screws the estimate in his hands.*) There! that's ruined, anyhow; and will have to be re-written. Talk about love in a cottage, if I go on like this it'll be a case of love in a padded room. (*Sits at desk. Takes up pen, chews the handle, then breaks it up, and throws pieces down, passionately.*) Oh! If I could only say "God help me." But I cannot. Why did that Professor teach me that religion is a myth? The myth was there to lean upon. But the reality! The reality seems impossible. It is so horribly unreal.

I must run for it. I cannot lift Rose up. I will not drag her down. I'll go at once. I won't see her again. My darling! not see her again! Oh! Rosie, Rosie! There are twelve hundred millions of human beings in this ridiculous old world, and I must fly from the only one I care for. I wish the governor were not so idiotically sensible. If we could only put young heads on old shoulders life would be worth living. (*Noise heard—off.*) Halloo! What's the row?

[*Enter, door in flat, SIR JAMES GRINDROD, followed by WATERS.*]

SIR JAS.: It is monstrous. Send them away. Tell them I'm engaged. (*To ARTHUR*) Did you ever *hear* of such impudence?

ARTHUR: What's the matter, father?

SIR JAS.: A deputation of women—colliers' wives—have come here and asked for an interview.

ARTHUR: Poor creatures, I wish you'd see them, father.

SIR JAS.: Oh! I don't mind seeing them. It's hearing them I object to. Why, my dear boy, there are twenty of them.

ARTHUR: Let them send up three.

SIR JAS.: Would you like me to see them?

ARTHUR: I should very much, father.

SIR JAS. (to WATERS): Go and tell them to send up three. No more, mind. [Exit WATERS.]

SIR JAS. (to ARTHUR): Well, Arthur, I think you'd better go and—ah—smoke a cigar.

ARTHUR: Yes, father, I'm off. (Aside) I wonder whether Rose is with them. But I must be firm. I must not see her.

SIR JAS.: Your hat is on the desk, my boy.

ARTHUR: Yes, father (*crosses to desk*). I suppose I shall only be in the way if I stay here.

SIR JAS.: That's all, Arthur.

ARTHUR (*picking up hat*): All right. If you *should* want me, ring.

(*He throws his hat into the waste-paper basket, and is lifting estimate to his head. Then picks up hat, kicks basket, and goes off, right, through door. SIR JAMES looks on astonished.*)

SIR JAS.: What has come to the boy? Is he worrying about this lock-out? To tell the truth, I'm rather sick of it. The men and their families have suffered severely, and must suffer more. It is a pity they are so wickedly obstinate. If they would only make the first move it could be settled. We have cleared out our stocks at splendid prices, and could afford to compromise the matter. But of course we cannot make

overtures. It would never do for us to give in at this time of day. Still, Pasker was right. It is bitterly hard on the women and children. What a *pity* the men are so pig-headed.

[*Enter WATERS, door in flat.*]

WATERS: The female delicates, Sir James.

[*Enter MARTHA BILLAM, ROSE BRADSHAW, and HANNAH BLENKIRON.*]

[*Exit WATERS.*]

SIR JAS.: Now, my good women, what have you to say to me?

(*MRS. BLENKIRON curtsies and smiles.*)

MRS. BLENKIRON: Yes, Sir James. Yo' see, Sir James——

ROSE: One moment, Hannah, let Martha speak first.

MARTHA: If yo' please, sir, we should like to speak to yo' about this lock-aht. I hope you'll think no worse of us for intruding.

SIR JAS.: I certainly think no better of the men for sending you.

MARTHA: Oh, sir. Mothers need no sendin'.

HANNAH: By gow, nooa. We're none sent. We'n coom on us own 'ook, Sir James.

SIR JAS.: But surely this is unnecessary. I am willing to meet the men if they wish to make overtures.

HANNAH: Eh! bless yer dear 'art—Sir Jaames—t' men 'll clem while ther' back-booans files 'oles i' ther' ribs afore they'll mak ony ovvertures——

ROSE: The lock-out has lasted ten weeks, sir. The weather is very cold, and the little children——

MARTHA: Ay, it's t' childer.

SIR JAS.: The work is there, if the men will do it.

MARTHA : But at such a price, sir. We cannot live on it. Indeed we cannot.

SIR JAS. : I am sorry. But if prices fall, wages must fall. I cannot keep up the market. The consumer——

HANNAH (*pushing to the front*) : T' consumer ! Oi, whet is it as 'e consumes ? 'E's consumed aw' t' strength aht o' ahr Silas's owd back, an' all th' pleasure aht o' my life, wi' 'is consumin'——

SIR JAS. : My good woman, this is not a question of sentiment. It is a question of economics, about which you know nothing.

HANNAH : Whet ? I knows nothin' abaht *economics* ? If we women know nowt abaht *economics*, whooa dooes ?

SIR JAS. : But, my good woman, I can *not* understand——

HANNAH : Ah ! Nah tha'rt spakin', Sir Jaames. Of coorse, *yo'* cannot understond. Ha' con a gentleman be expected to understond *economics* saame as a' owd married woman like me ?

SIR JAS. : If you will only——

HANNAH : Eh, dear ! *Economics*. Wait while yo've brought up a family o' nine on twenty-four shillin' a week, an' paid club money, and schooil fees, an' fended t' weather aht o' eleven pair o' clogs, an' 'ad to scrat an' tow, an' wesh an' darn fro' mornin' to neet, t' keep t' bum bailies off o' t' doorstuns, and a fresh child coomin' every eighteen month——

MARTHA : Hannah !

HANNAH : Tha says reight, Martha, an' t' way as them lads gets t' porridge dahn 'em, an' werrits their knees and cetera through ther trahsers slops, an' a weshin' o' clooas ivery Monday like t' flags at a royal

weddin', an' meeat that price yo'd think as t' beeasts wor fed o' threepenny-bits, as I say to ahr Silas, a woman mud as weel be ass to an apple man, as wife to a collier. By gow, Sir Jaames, if it cooms to talkin' abaht *economics*, let them talk as 'es t' mooast to saay.

SIR JAS.: It is really a waste of time to continue this discussion.

ROSE: Oh, Sir James, surely it is not a waste of time to try to make peace. There seems to be some terrible misunderstanding. We know there is no ill-will on the part of the men——

(Noise heard off.)

SIR JAS.: What is that noise? *(He goes to window.)* Why, there is a riot! There is a crowd of colliers attacking a bread shop. The police are driving them back.

(The women go to the window.)

This is too much. Where are are my glasses? Who is that scoundrel leading the rioters on? Who is the blackguard?

ROSE: That is no scoundrel. That is my father.

SIR JAS.: Your father! Upon my word. And you come here to preach conciliation. *(He rings bell.)* I think you had better preach to your friends. Of all the impudence——

[Enter WATERS.]

Charles, show these women out.

(WATERS opens door. ROSE and MARTHA go slowly out.)

SIR JAMES crosses over right. HANNAH stands left, and puts her arms akimbo.)

HANNAH: Women, eh? Show 'em aht, eh? But if ahr men 'ad 'arts i' their bodies as big as chicken's fists,

i'steead o' bein', like ahr Silas, a flock o' silly, long-sufferin' baa-lambs, they'd varry sooin show *thee* aht, owd 'igh-and-mighty.

MARTHA (*calling back through door*): Hush, Hannah.

HANNAH: Dry up wi' thee, Martha, a body cannot get a word in edgeways wi' thee din. But let them crow t' lahdest as crows t' last, Sir Jaames. Tha' may show Hannah Blenkiron aht to-day, Sir Jaames; but tha'll see 'er ageean, Sir Jaames, an' 'ear 'er an' all.

[*Exit* SIR JAMES *door right*.]

(HANNAH *turns to* WATERS, *who is standing by door with his hands in his vest pockets*.)

HANNAH: Nah, then, owd waxwork, tak' thee 'ands aht o' thee maister's pockets, an' oppen t' door to a leady.

[*Exit* HANNAH, *followed by* WATERS.]

[SCENE CHANGES.]

SCENE 2.

BROADMAINE BECK, *by moonlight. Right a plantation of trees surrounded by low wooden palings. Footbridge crossing beck right centre.*

[*Enter left* BRADSHAW, *with bag and gun*.]

BRADSHAW (*looking back left*): Coom on wi' thee. Coom on.

TRUDGE (*off left*): Wait a minute. D'y'ear? Wait a minute.

[*Enter* TRUDGE *left*.]

I say, Bill. Would yer like a smoke?

BRADSHAW: I should that.

TRUDGE: So should I, but I've no 'bacca.

BRADSHAW: Owd maadlin', tha's as much sense as tha' wor born wi'.

TRUDGE: If you've as much beauty as yer was born with you was a bloomin' ugly kid. But sense or no sense, I shall have some rabbits to-night, if your whiskers don't set the wood afire.

(Sings and dances.)

Oh, it's my delight on a shiny night
In the see-heason of the ye-hear.

This is what I calls business. You chaps talks too much, an' does too little. I was fond of talking myself once, afore I was growed up. Used to talk jest like you do. It was all Sociology, Sociology, Sociology. Now it's copology. That's the game. What's the use o' sittin' in stuffy clubrooms cursin' the rich when yer can please yerselves an' rile them by sneakin' their rabbits.

BRADSHAW: Sneakin' *their* rabbits? They're nooan *their* rabbits. We've as much reight to 'em as they 'ave. Ethically we've moore reight.

TRUDGE: There you go. More chow-chow, more moralisin'. You can't even prig a rabbit without a bloomin' "ethical basis."

BRADSHAW: Th'art an ignorant toad, Tom, an' we cannot expect an ignorant toad to respect knowledge.

TRUDGE: I'm a 'onest rogue, Bill, and you can't expect a 'onest rogue to respect 'umbug.

BRADSHAW: I tell thee owd Grindrod 'asn't the smallest reight to them rabbits——

TRUDGE: He may not 'ave the smallest right. But he has some o' the biggest keepers, an' they'll take more gettin over than any moral scruple as ever troubled *me*. Look 'ere, old bogey-face. I'll explain it to yer. This

'ere's a estate (*throws down bag*). This 'ere's a rabbit (*throws cap on bag*). This 'ere's a keeper (*pulls BRADSHAW forward*). An' 'ere's Tom Trudge. Now, if Tom Trudge can sneak that there rabbit an' get away with it, that's Tom's rabbit, an' a man has a right to what's his own. That's logic. But if the keeper cops Tom, an' takes the rabbit off 'im, then poor Tom 'as no *locus standi*, an' will be decidedly *unboneyfied* in callin' that rabbit his. That's practical reason.

BRADSHAW: Th'art a foil.

TRUDGE: An' you're wise, but your belly's empty, an' what's the use o' bein' Solomon without 'is glory?

BRADSHAW: You cannot settle any o' these problems, whether it be th' stealin' of a rabbit, or foundin' of a social system, unless you start fro' an ethical basis.

TRUDGE: Well, if you're goin' poachin' to-night keep yer ethical basis out o' the keepers' way, cos they wears thick boots.

BRADSHAW: If they coom across me they'll find I've a heavy hond.

TRUDGE; An' if they comes across me they'll find as I've a light foot. Never tackle a keeper. If you prove best man 'e gets two lovely black eyes. If 'e proves best man you get twelve months 'ard——

(*Sings and works his feet as if on a treadmill.*)

Oh! dat golden staircase.

Oh! dat golden staircase.

BRADSHAW: I'd give summat to see thee serious.

TRUDGE: An' I'd give all as I 'aven't got to see you smile. You're too bloomin' solemn. You wants ter eat more an' think less. You're too much given to right reason and wrong hats. Yer won't do, William, yer

won't do. But let's get ter business. Come on, old mum-chance. Buck up! This is a huntin' tower, not a funeral.

(BRADSHAW and TRUDGE *climb fence and exit into park.*)

[*Enter ARTHUR GRINDROD right l.e.*]

ARTHUR: She is sure to come this way. I must be a man. I must say good-bye, and I must go away. I must go at once. I cannot marry her. I daren't risk temptation any longer. I dare not——

[*Enter ROSE, r.u.e. She stops suddenly on bridge.*]

Good-evening, Miss Bradshaw (*raising his hat*). I hope I didn't alarm you.

ROSE: Mr. Grindrod?

ARTHUR: You are surprised to see me. Fact is, I was going for a stroll as far as the pits——

ROSE (*coming down centre*): Yes.

ARTHUR: And I—no. That's a lie. I came to meet *you*.

ROSE: Oh! Mr. Grindrod.

ARTHUR: Forgive me. I didn't mean to tell the truth—no, I don't mean that. Ah—fact is—I'm going away.

ROSE: Going away! Where to?

ARTHUR: Anywhere. Abroad. I don't know. I don't care. Do *you* care?

ROSE: I shall be sorry. But *must* you go?

ARTHUR: You *know* I must. You know *why* I must.

ROSE: Please, Mr. Grindrod, don't say that.

ARTHUR: I didn't mean to say it. I only meant to say good-bye. But I must say it. I love you.

ROSE: Don't. Please, don't. You frighten me.

ARTHUR: Pray pardon me. I will say no more. I will go. (*Holding out his hand.*) Good-bye.

ROSE (*giving him her hand*): Good-bye, Mr. Grindrod.

ARTHUR: No. I cannot. I cannot go like that.

ROSE: You must. You must.

ARTHUR: I will not. Rosie—my darling. Kiss me.

ROSE (*trying to withdraw her hand*): No. Oh, no, no.

ARTHUR: You shall. (*They struggle.*)

ROSE: Mr. Grindrod! Let me go. How dare you?

(*ARTHUR draws her to him and kisses her.*) Oh! you coward.
(*He releases her.*)

ARTHUR (*drawing away from her*): My God. It is true.

ROSE: No, no! It isn't true. It isn't true. It is I that am a coward to call you that.

ARTHUR: It was true.

ROSE (*taking him by the arm*): No, no, no! I was the coward to presume upon my weakness to call you that. Oh, I am so sorry. Forgive me. Oh, won't you forgive me? Won't you look at me?

ARTHUR: Rose!

ROSE: Say you forgive me.

ARTHUR: Forgive you—darling? I love you. Now let me go.

ROSE: Yes, you must go. Good-bye,—Mr. Grindrod.

ARTHUR: For the first time—since it must be the last—call me Arthur.

ROSE: Good-bye—Arthur.

ARTHUR: Good-bye—Rosie—God bless you.

(*They look at each other earnestly. ARTHUR kisses her. She bursts into tears, and exit right l.e. ARTHUR stands, hat in hand, looking after her, then exit over bridge.*)

BRADSHAW *climbs over park palings, runs up on to the bridge and is raising gun to fire. Enter MARTHA BILLAM r.l.e.*

She runs up behind BRADSHAW, seizes gun and forces him round.)

MARTHA: Leave lose o' t' gun, Bradshaw, leave lose o' t' gun. Dos ta went to be a murderer? Dos ta went to breeak yo're Rosie's heart?

BRADSHAW: Let me gooa. I'll kill 'im. I'll shoot 'im like a dog.

(He wrenches gun away. MARTHA seizes him by the breast of his coat.)

MARTHA: Tha shall n't gooa. I'll howd thee, if tha kills me. *(They stand.)*

BRADSHAW: What are yo' doin' 'ere? Are yo' i' t' plot, an' all?

MARTHA: Ha' can ta ask sich a thing? I came to meet yo're Rosie. I thought shoo'd be lonely. I never thought they'd be anybody wi' 'er. I've nobbut just run up.

BRADSHAW: Well; let me lose. He's gotten off this time. But I'll watch 'im; an' I'll kill 'im. I'll kill 'im t' first time I see 'im, if it's in a church.

MARTHA: Curb thi' passion, mun. Th'art thinkin' wrang o' him, an' Rosie.

BRADSHAW: Thinkin' wrang? Did ta see 'em together?—secretly—at neet—them two—Sir Jaames Grindrod's son, an' a collier's doughter—*my* doughter? Whet con I think?

MARTHA: Dooant judge too harshly.

BRADSHAW: He kissed her. Did ta see 'im kiss 'er? Wod shoo let 'im kiss 'er unless shoo cared for 'im?

MARTHA: But, Bradshaw, Rosie's good. Oh, I'm sure shoo's good an' pure.

BRADSHAW: An' if shoo's ever so pure, an' he's a villain, an' shoo loves 'im, whet chance 'as 'er purity,

again 'er own love 'an 'is villainy? I tell thee I'll kill 'im.

MARTHA: Tha' mustn't talk like that. Tha' mustn't think o' such things. Doesn't ta know as wer' all i' God's hands? An' ha con yo' ask Him to protect Rosie while yo' have murder in yo're 'art.

BRADSHAW: I'll *kill* him. He's a villain—a cold-blooded, sneakin', unmerciful villain, an' 'e dees. It's no moore sin to shooit 'im ner any other beast o' prey.

MARTHA: Bradshaw! Think o' yo're own doughter. Think o' yo're own sins. Think o' Him as deed for us all. Go home an' pray for a cleean 'art. God will defend them as fears 'im.

BRADSHAW: It's a lie. Theer is no God. If theer wor a God could 'e sit still i' 'is 'eaven an' see t' things as we've seen? Could 'e see my poor wife clem to deeath? Could 'e see little childer brought up to want an' shaame? Could 'e see t' parson's pride, an' t' rich mon's insolence? Could 'e see what I've seen i' t' Loondon streets an' net rain dahn fire?

MARTHA: Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

BRADSHAW: Theer's nooa vengeance an' nooa justice i' t' world twixt rich an' poor. Tha knows ha God protected my sister.

MARTHA: Dooan't spake on it.

BRADSHAW: I will. Shoo wor a bonny lass. An' shoo wor pure an' good. An' he wor a villain—an' shoo loved 'im.

MARTHA: Bradshaw, dear owd friend!

BRADSHAW: Con I forget it? Con I forgive it? I saw her lyin' deead o' t' stone floor of a staable, wi' 'er weet curls full o' green weed, an' fahl mud between 'er pretty lips.

MARTHA : Dooant spake on it, William. Be calm, lad.

BRADSHAW : Calm ! He escaped me. He's abrooad—rich and honoured. Wheer's my sister, as wor 'er mother's pet ? Shoo's deead. Shoo might ha' lived to worse endin's. An' nah ; an' nah I see another—another damned fine-spokken, fair-faced gentleman blackguard with my—girl—my Rose ! An' I'll *kill* 'im. I'll see 'is soul run aht on t' grahnd like water. I will. I sweet it.

(MARTHA seizes his hand.)

MARTHA : William. Don't say such wicked things. Be patient. Ask help of Heaven—

BRADSHAW : I cannot. I tell thee I cannot. He's a villain, an' 'e mun dee. Him t' fust, an' me after. I'm fain an' glad to gooa. There's nowt left i' aw t' world, nah ! Oh, Rosie, Rosie ! (*He sobs.*)

MARTHA : Poor lad : poor William. We shall pray for thee to-neet. Ahr little Lily shall lift 'er little hands for thee an' thine.

(*Music : the Lullaby.*)

(TRUDGE *climbs over fence and throws down some rabbits.*)

TRUDGE : Buy, buy, buy : come buy. 'Ere's me beauties. 'Ere's me darlin's. Pick 'em out, ladies an' gentlemen, the big 'uns is all large. (*Sees BRADSHAW's grief.*) Why, Bill, old man, what's the matter ?

BRADSHAW (*hoarsely*) : Nothin'. I've seen another — poacher, an' I've saaved me cartridge—for—another—daay.

(BRADSHAW *centre, leaning on gun. MARTHA left, holding his left hand. TRUDGE right, rubbing his hair and looking sideways at them with a troubled face. The rabbits at his feet.*)

[ACT DROP.]

ACT IV.

GEORGE BILLAM'S COTTAGE, as in Act II, but stripped of all furniture except a cradle, made of half a soda-cask on rude rockers, a small cask for a table, with cheap lamp on it, a low cheap stool and one chair. A few red embers in grate. A dark snowy night.

Music : The lullaby, very soft.

Discovered : MARTHA BILLAM, sitting on stool and watching child in cradle ; GEORGE BILLAM standing on her left with his right hand on her shoulder.

BILLAM : Shoo seems very badly to-neet, lass—mun I gooa fer t' doctor ?

MARTHA : George ! t' doctor ? My poor lad, doesn't 'a understand ?

BILLAM : Whet dosta meean ?

MARTHA : Ahr little Lily's droopin', lad. Shoo's deein'.

BILLAM : Martha !

MARTHA : It's true, love. (*She reaches up and takes his hand.*)

BILLAM : It's net true. I cannot spare 'er. I will not spare 'er.

MARTHA : It's t' Maister's will.

BILLAM : T' Maister's will. Oi, it's t' maisters' will. It's t' maisters as locked us aht, an kept us aht, thro' all these weary weeks. If ahr Lily dees, it's them as 'as killed 'er. But I'll net bear it. I'll resist, I'll rebel agen t' "maisters' will."

MARTHA: George, be calm, lad. This is th' Heavenly Maister's will, an' we mun bow to it. Ahr Lily's deein, lad. All's ovver nah! Yon cruel winter wind 'as stabbed 'er like a knife. Shoo's but a few minutes moor to suffer.

BILLAM: They've killed 'er. I will not bear it. I'll have life for life——

MARTHA: George! Be steady, lad. Be a man. Dooant fail nah, i' the ahr o' trial: thee as has been so faithful. Who put th' keen edge o'th' east wind? Who hardened Grindrod's 'art? Him as is takin' ahr darlin' from us, gave 'er to us. An' we mun submit. (*Bursting into tears.*) But, oh! shoo's my only child, my flower an' my treasure, an' I love 'er sooa, I love 'er sooa.

BILLAM: It is too much. I cannot bear it. I tell thee if shoo dees——

MARTHA: Hush—dooan't disturb 'er—it's nooa use o' talkin'. We *must* spare 'er. I tell thee shoo's deein'.

BILLAM: Oh, it cannot be, it cannot be.

MARTHA: Hearken, lad. Dosta 'ear how shoo breathes—fainter, and fainter? Shoo's gooin' aht slow an' steady; like t' tides o't' seea. Doctor's nooa use nah, lad; anger's no use nah. Shoo's nearer heaven nor earth. Coom, be patient. Sit thee dahn, an' bless 'er while shoo gooas.

BILLAM: I cannot. I cannot watch her dee.

MARTHA: Poor lad, poor lad. Sit yonder, then, while I sing ahr darlin' asleep.

THE LULLABY.

Now slumber, slumber, my darling,
All day's dark sorrows have fled.
Now slumber, slumber, my darling,
Thy mother stays by thy bed.

Now day and its sorrows are fled,
And the night bringeth peace in her train.
Then slumber, slumber, my darling,
Forget all sorrow and pain.
Then slumber, slumber, my darling,
Forget all sorrow and pain.

(GEORGE BILLAM crosses over left and sits in chair with his back to cradle, and lays his head in his arm. MARTHA kneels by cradle, rocking it very gently, and singing lullaby. During song ROSE enters at door. She goes softly over to BILLAM and stands by his chair with her hand on his shoulder. Shortly after BRADSHAW enters. He walks softly down left, and stands with his hands in his pockets and his head bent, facing audience. After a time MARTHA ceases to rock cradle and takes hold of the baby's hand. Then she stops singing, gradually breaking down into a sob. She lays the baby's hand down very gently.)

MARTHA (through her tears): By-bye, baby, by-bye darlin'.

(She kisses the baby, and remains kneeling for a moment. BILLAM kneels by his chair weeping. ROSE stands by, leaning over him. BRADSHAW takes off his hat and stands left, looking towards cradle with a fierce sidelong glance and clenched fists. TRUDGE enters at door and takes cap off, standing in doorway. Music dies gradually away. MARTHA rises. ROSE crosses over to her.)

MARTHA: Shoo's gooan, Rosie. Ahr darlin's gooan. (ROSE weeps.) Nay, dooan't cry, lass, shoo's 'appy. Shoo's gained heaven at a gift, withaht payin' long years o' sufferin'. Shoo's an angel, nah! One o' God's choristers. (She turns to BILLAM). George, tha munna

fret, lad. It's aw for t' best. Shoo might ha' growed up to be a woman—a miner's wife—an' see her loved ones pine an' dee.

ROSE: Yes, yes, she's better off, dear.

MARTHA (*to Bradshaw*): Yo' 'ave seen grief enew, William, an' 'll be glad to know my child's i' Heaven.

(TRUDGE *comes down left. Two Colliers enter and follow him.*)

BRADSHAW: Ay, it's 'ard to lose 'em. But they're better deead.

MARTHA: Deead? Ahr Lily's nooan deead. Shoo's livin'. Shoo's i' t' Better Land.

ROSE (*anxiously*): Martha. Come away now, dear. Come and lie down. You are weak and ill yourself. You are worn out with watching.

BRADSHAW: An' clemmin'. Deoan't forget that.

MARTHA: In a minute, love. But let me tell these neighbours first as I've a child i' Heaven. Mr. Trudge, had yo' ever a child?

TRUDGE: No. I thank God.

MARTHA: Tha' foolish mon. But how should ta know owt o' such things? I tell thee it's a grand thing to be t' mother o' one o' God's angels.

ROSE: Come, dear, come.

MARTHA: But yo' all seem so sad. Why, Rosie, even yo'. But th'art net 'er mother, or tha'd be prahd—tha'd be prahd.

BRADSHAW: Poor wench.

MARTHA: Ha' bonny shoo'l look, ahr Lily, in 'er sweet white robes, an' 'ow th' angels will flock around, like white doves, to kiss 'er—to kiss her—my Lily—my child—an' I cannot kiss 'er—I cannot ever kiss 'er ageean. (*She breaks down and sobs.*)

TRUDGE (*wiping his eyes on his hands*): I'm a lonely old vagabone, an' never loved nobody, but this 'ere touches a bloke on the raw.

(GEORGE *crosses to* MARTHA.)

BILLAM: Be braave, lass, be braave. The Lord giveth, an' the Lord taketh away——

MARTHA: Yes, yes. Coom, Rosie. Yes, that's reight. An' shoo's i' Heaven; an' shoo's 'appy. An' I'm appy coshoo's 'appy. Coom, Rosie. Oh! I am sooa happy, sooa happy. My darling's at peeace—i' heaven.

[ROSE *and* MARTHA *exit upstairs*.]

TRUDGE: Poor woman. She's 'ard 'it.

BRADSHAW: Ay, mon. There's nooan but a mother knows what a big hole a little coffin maakes. But coom, chaps, whet's to be done? Mun us talk ahtside, or whet?

BILLAM: Talk here, an' nah.

BRADSHAW: Well, summat mun be settled. There's a crahd o' t' men waitin' ahtside for a decision. Mun I call t'other delegates in?

BILLAM: Yes.

BRADSHAW (*going up to door*): Come in chaps.

(*Three other Colliers enter and come down left. All uncover their heads.*)

Nah, then. Is it to be starvation or war? Look at this house as wer' in. T' wife's near deead; t' child is deead. Awt' furniture an' clothin's been sold. As it is 'ere it is i' other houses. I' some it's waur. Jim Riley's child deed this mornin'—o' fair dahn hunger. Yesterday ovver twenty men went into t' warkuss. Young Bill 'Arry, son o' widder Booth, as good a lad as ever stept, is doin' time fer poachin'.

Aw funds is used up, and men an' their families is clemmin' to deeach, or feedin' o' scraps o' offal. I mysen 'as ner taasted food fer near on forty-eight ahrs. Are we to gooa on at this? We shall be forced by sheer starvation to dee or to give in. I say feight for it. Feight t' police, feight t' sowjers, burn t' maisters aht o' haase an' home. Coom, whoa spakes? I'm for war. I'm wearied o' watchin' childer dee.

TRUDGE: I'm too bloomin' 'ungry to think, an' a feller must do somethin.' I'm for a bloomin' row. It's a poor bloomin' dog as won't fight for 'is bloomin' bone.

[Enter ROSE, downstairs.]

ROSE: Please speak low. I want Martha to get some rest. She is almost hysterical. (*She goes to cradle, and covers it with the sheet.*)

BILLAM: I'm ageean violence. Me an' my wife 'as suffered much—ahr child lies deead afore us—but I saay two wrangs don't mak' a reight. I'm for peeace.

TRUDGE: Hang peace; give me plenty.

BRADSHAW: I con tell yer one thing, t' men is tired o' peeace. They're ripe for owt 'at's active. I never knowed 'em sooa angry, nor sooa dangerous. If we dooant act they will. But I'm wi' 'em. I went to get my hands round one prahd stiff neck, an' brek it.

(MARTHA appears at stair-head. Her hair falling down, her dress disarranged, a wild look on her face. She stands and listens.)

BILLAM: Violence is nooa good. I saay—

BRADSHAW: Vote, vote!

DELEGATES: Vote, vote!

BILLAM: So be it. I propose that this committee

recommends the men to keep the peace, and try to settle the dispute by constitutional means——

MARTHA: What poor thing is that as talks o' peeace?

BILLAM (*starts and sees Martha*): Martha.

MARTHA: Peeace, peeace, when there is nooa peeace. Silence! For shaame.

ROSE: Martha! Oh! my dear, what ails you?

MARTHA: Stop him, then. Send him awaay. He is no man. (*Turning to Colliers*) Yo' are none on yo' men.

BRADSHAW: Coom, my poor lass, go back to thi bed.

MARTHA: Where is my child?

BILLAM: Martha!

MARTHA: She is deead. They have *murdered* her.

BRADSHAW: By God, it's true.

MARTHA: They have murdered her—by constitutional meean. No violence was used. And yo' will use nooan.

BILLAM: God help us. What is this?

MARTHA: Wilful murder. That's all. No moore, no less. Oh! You *cowards*.

BRADSHAW: It's true. Wer' nowt else.

ROSE: Dear Martha.

MARTHA: Cowards! Pitiful cowards, all.

ROSE: Oh, don't heed her. She does not know what she says.

MARTHA: Away, woman! I went nooa women nah. I went men: men—men—men! Oh, are there nooan left alive? My child is murdered. Give me a knife, an' yo' shall see the colour of the slayer's blood.

BILLAM: My wife! Oh, men! Shoo's gooin' mad.

BRADSHAW: It's us as hez been mad. Shoo's talkin' sense.

BILLAM: Howd thi fool's tongue, Bradshaw. Martha, coom wi' me, my darlin'.

(*He approaches stairs. MARTHA utters a wild shriek and waves him back. ROSE crosses to BRADSHAW. TRUDGE, wiping his eyes on his sleeve, goes out through door.*)

BRADSHAW : Let 'er speeak.

DELEGATES : Let 'er speeak, let 'er speeak !

MARTHA : Speeak, speeak ? It's all yo' do, yo' cowards. It's all yo' dar' do.

BRADSHAW : Try us.

MARTHA : I have found yo' wantin'. Yo' do nowt but preeach. Yo' preeach o' reights. I'll have nooa reights. I'll have wrang for wrang.

BILLAM : Martha. Dear wife.

MARTHA : Where is my baaby ? My innocent Lily ? They have *murdered* her. Give me a knife, and I will murder too. Oh ! is there never a man amang 'yo' fain for hell ?

BRADSHAW : Here's one.

MARTHA : No. Tha'rt a coward. Yo' are all cowards, or one fine house wod be i' flames, one grey-haired murderer wod be gashed an' trampled.

(*She comes down stairs and stops.*)

Curse yo' :

“Curse yo' all,
Great an' small,

That cannot give back my daughter.”

ROSE (*going towards MARTHA*) : Martha ; don't you know me ? It is I, Rosie. Come to me, dear heart.

MARTHA : No. It is hate I went, net love ; revenge, net counsel. I will speeak to th' people. (*She goes towards window.*)

ROSE : George, George ; the doctor. Run for the doctor. She is going mad.

GEORGE: I cannot leeave her.

ROSE: Yes. Go, go. I will stay by her. Oh, father, try to quiet her.

(MARTHA tears open the window.)

BRADSHAW: Let her speak.

[Exit BILLAM through door hastily.]

(MARTHA stands at window. Crowd outside cheer. Snow is seen falling.)

MARTHA: Men o' the misty hills; men o' the bloody mines; men o' muscle an' pluck: Yo're childer are clemmin', yo're wives are shaamed for yo'. How long will yo' endure? Ha' long; ha' long?

(Roars from crowd.)

ROSE: Martha! Dear sister, dear friend—

MARTHA: Awaay! I have no friends but them as will feight for me, kill wi' me, dee wi' me. (To crowd) Men an' women—yo' men an' women o' th' pits—have yo' no love for me, no pity, no raage?

(Roars from the crowd.)

My baaby, my harmless pet, wi' love on 'er lips an' Heaven in 'er eyes—where is shoo?

(Murmurs from crowd.)

They have murdered her.

(Roars.)

ROSE (clinging to MARTHA'S dress): Martha. Dear Martha.

MARTHA: Silence! Will soft words waken my deead darlin'? (To crowd) Men an' women, they have murdered her. Who has murdered her?

(Murmurs.)

Who has sent ahr men to deeath i't' mines, an' ahr

women to t' warkus, or to t' graave? Who has robbed yo', driven yo, despised yo'?

(Roars.)

Who has kept yo' clemmin' wi' food locked up i' t' shops? Who has kept yo' starved wi' th' earth full o' fuel? Who has stolen t' strength aht o' men's hands, hope fro' their wives' hearts, light fro' their childers' eyes?

(Roars.)

ROSE (*comes down left and takes hold of BRADSHAW'S arm*): Father, speak to her.

BRADSHAW: I can tache 'er nowt. She's tachin' me.

MARTHA (*to crowd*): Who 'as locked yo' out fro' work an' fro' meeat, until ahr homes are bare, an' ahr bodies perished, an' we ate every one the flesh of his own arm?

(Roars.)

Who has wrought yo' this wrang an' shaame? Who but yo're maisters?

(Roars.)

Ay', yo're maisters, as holds yo' like beeasts o' burden, under whip an' gooad! Shaame on yo', men. Ha' long will yo' grovel afore them vile things o' pride an' scorn, that yo' ha' fed, an' feared, an' pampered? Ha' long will yo' be traitors to yo're women, an' dastards to yo're bairns?

(Roars.)

BRADSHAW: Justice! Give us Justice.

DELEGATES: Justice, Justice.

CROWD: Justice, Justice.

MARTHA: Justice? No! *Revenge!* Will justice give us back our dead? Will justice waken my murdered child? Give us blood for blood, murder for murder.

(Roars.)

Every crippled man, an' starvin' child, an' broken pauper; every lost daughter o' shaame; all th' broken toys of lust and luxury, cry aloud to yo' men an' women o' t' North—" *Revenge!* "

(*Roars.*)

To arms, men! To arms, women! To arms!

CROWD (*To arms!*)

(BRADSHAW and others fetch guns, picks, &c., from door and serve them out.)

ROSE: God help her.

MARTHA: Ay, God help us. T' God o' battles; t' God o' plagues; t' God o' vengeance. Let him destroy ahr enemies. Let him break the teeth o' the wicked. Their gold is made of ahr blood, their blood is made of ahr gold. But he shall break them.

(*Roars.*)

See, men, th' snow cooms driftin' dahn. Snow flaakes white an' pure. Like my murdered darlin'. Snow covers all th' earth. It lies o' th' earth all white an' stainless. But it shall be painted wi' letters o' blood from tyrants' veins, an' melted wi' the heat o' roof-trees burnin'.

(*Roars.*)

Beautiful flaames. Bloody as blood, an' yellow as gold. To arms! Let Mercy hide her eyes to-night, and Hell enlarge her desire.

(*Roars.*)

(MARTHA comes down right. Crowd flock into room and group at back and left.)

MARTHA: Light! Give me light. There's homes for the burnin'. Ha, ha, ha! I thought my child had gooaan

to Heaven. I wor a fooil. Ha, ha, ha! There is nooa Heaven. It's aw Hell. Ha, ha, ha! How droll to think of it.

(She snatches up the baby's chair and dashes it down. It breaks to pieces. She takes one of the long legs, pulls the sheet off the cradle, tears it, and winds the strips round leg of chair to make a torch. Then she smashes the lamp over the torch.

While doing this she talks to herself.)

An' I grieved. Why grieve? Ha, ha, ha! Nowt to grieve for. Everything to—to—re—joice for. Nah we will have—have spoort. Ha, ha, ha! *Such* spoort. When the wicked steel dances, an' the red flames clap their hands. Ha, ha, ha!

Nah, men. Nah, my darlin's. Nah for spoort. Spoort o' the leapin' flaames, the gashes, an' the stabs. Awaay men, awaay women, awaay, I tell yo', to the game as fooils call *murder*!

(Crowd roar.)

(ROSE runs to MARTHA and is thrown off.)

MARTHA: Down, baby; down, fooil. Nah, men, nah, my darlin's. The song, the song. *(She holds up torch and faces the crowd.)*

BRADSHAW: The song! Whet song?

MARTHA: The song, the song. There's only one song for starvin' folk to sing.

(She lights torch at fire.)

CROWD sing "Marseillaise" on stage.

(Cheers are heard without. The crowd march towards door. MARTHA in centre bearing lighted torch. ROSE on her knees by cradle sobbing violently. Sound without of tramping clogs.)

CHORUS *sing* :

Long have you heard your children weeping,
For bread they cry in vain to you—
Why do you lie there dreaming, sleeping,
When there is wicked work to do?
When there is cruel work to do?
Your lazy masters pile up plunder,
They feast and prey, and do not spare,
But from your weary toil and care
They wring the wealth at which you wonder.
To arms, to arms, ye brave!
The red flag laughs on high!
March on, march on!
March on, brave men and true,
To liberty or death.

[ACT DROP.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

INTERIOR OF A HUT AT BROADMAINE PITS. *Door centre in flat, a window on each side. Door right. Stove left. Form under window, left.*

Discovered: SERGEANT HARDSTONE and SIX PRIVATES of the RAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY. *In great coats and helmets. SERGEANT standing with back to stove, smoking wooden pipe. BOBEL sitting in front of stove, smoking short clay pipe. O'FLAHERTY, smoking long clay pipe, and walking to and fro across stage, from left to right centre. Three other SOLDIERS asleep under window right, and one sitting up amongst them smoking. A dark night, with snow and wind.*

SERG.: Chaw, chaw, chaw! You're always chawing the rag. I tell you we're here to preserve the peace.

BOBEL: Damn the peace. I aint a bloomin' bobby. I'm a bloomin' soldier. I didn't list for peace, like O'Flaherty, there. I listed for battle, murder, and suddin death. An' I won't be 'appy till I gets 'em.

O'FLAHERTY: Listen to the lion roarun' for blood. You wait till the Riot Act's afther bein' read, me jool.

BOBEL: The Riot Act! Why, you Irish goat, can you see any fun a standing in a bloomin' line while a crowd o' colliers plays skittles with yer with chunks o' rock? When we was out in the Rhondda Valley one o' the bloomin' Taffys 'it me under the jaw with 'arf a brick.

O'FLAHERTY: Be jabers, he ought to have got six months—for wastin' a round of ammunition.

BOBEL: Good old Tare-an'-ages, you're a smart soldier, ain't yer? Did the Queen give a shillin' for yer?

O'FLAHERTY: 'Deed an' she did; an' saw that she got me.

BOBEL: You'd be worth a penny, if you 'ad a stick to climb up.

O'FLAHERTY: Be the Pope's toe—an' I wish it was behint yez—if I was as ugly a soldier as yersilf, Private Shovels, I'd go to the Quarther Masther's stoores and change me face.

BOBEL: I wish to Gawd you'd *close* yer face: there's a hawful draught from it. Lend me a smoke o' yer pipe: mine's out.

(O'FLAHERTY *wipes mouthpiece of pipe under his arm and hands it to BOBEL.*)

O'FLAHERTY: Take ut, for the cheek of yez. If I'd as much cheek as yersilf, Private Shovels, I'd be afther openun' a pork shop.

SERGEANT: Well, duty has to be done, an' riot work is part of our duty.

BOBEL: I don't like it. It ain't amusin'.

O'FLAHERTY: It is *not*—especially whin yez have to fire into a crowd of unarmed men.

BOBEL: Pore chaps. They're Englishmen, like ourselves.

O'FLAHERTY: An' whin wuz I borrun in ye're dirthy, smoky, jerry-built island?

BOBEL: I forgot you was only a Hirishman. Well, I'll say they're *men*, like ourselves.

O'FLAHERTY: I'm wid yez there, Shovels. 'Tis a dirthy trade shootin' ye're own people.

SERGEANT: It isn't soldiering, that's a fact; and I like it as little as any of you. But folks should respect the law, and not kick up a bobbery.

BOBEL: Liberty's worth kickin' up a bobbery abaht.

SERGEANT: There's a difference between liberty and licence—but I suppose these poor chaps are too ignorant to know it.

PRIVATE GREEN (*speaking from amongst the sleepers*): There was a man called Gubbins, out in Morar, who was so ignorant he didn't know his own mouth from a hole in the ground.

O'FLAHERTY: Shure if his mouth was like yours, Billy Green——

THE SENTRY (*outside*): Halt-who-come-there!

A VOICE: Friend.

THE SENTRY: Pass friend—all's well.

(*Sleeping Soldiers rise, also BOBEL. All turn towards door.*)

[*Enter MARTHA BILLAM, handcuffed and escorted by Corporal and two men of the Ramshires. All with snow upon them.*]

CORPORAL: Here's a prisoner for you, Sergeant. Brought in from a scrimmage in town.

SERGEANT: Who is she?

CORPORAL: She won't speak.

SERGEANT: Now, my poor woman, who are you?

MARTHA: I'm a devil, I'm a devil, I'm a devil.

O'FLAHERTY: The poor divvle's very wet.

SERGEANT: What is your name?

MARTHA: Revenge.

BOBEL: Poor thing, poor thing. She's mad.

SERGEANT: As mad as a March hatter. (*To MARTHA*) Where do you come from?

MARTHA: From Hell.

SERGEANT: It doesn't seem to be as hot a climate as we're told.

MARTHA (*shivering*): Hell is cold, cold, cold! There the lost go shaken by the palsy of chilly death; torn by the fangs o' famine. Cold an' hunger; hunger an' cold. Cold, cold, cold! I am the only woman in the world. All the rest were starved in the strike.

O'FLAHERTY (*taking a can off stove*): God be good to yez, sishter. Take a drink o' this coffee.

MARTHA: No. You are a man, and all men are cruel. There's poison in it. Men delight in murder. In murder. Murder, murder, murder! They kill little babies. I know it. I have seen them die.

BOBEL: Here's yer bloomin' strike dooty. What did I tell yer? Are we soldiers? or are we prison warders, or madhouse keepers, or coppers, or what are we?

SERGEANT: It's an awful pity; but duty must be done, and this poor soul will be better here than out in the storm. Where's that cloak that was left here by the wounded Yeomanry man?

PRIVATE GREEN (*brings cloak from the corner. It is a long red cavalry cloak*): Here, Sergeant.

SERGEANT (*to CORPORAL*): Take off her handcuffs and that wet shawl. (*CORPORAL obeys.*) Now, my poor woman (*to MARTHA*), throw this round you, so, and come into this little office and lie down. There's a good fire, and I'll bring you the coffee.

MARTHA: Is there a corpse in there?

SERGEANT: No, my dear. Come along.

[*He opens door left and exit.*]

MARTHA: Where have they put it? Where have they put it? Where have they put it?

(*She follows slowly and exits through door left. SERGEANT re-enters and locks door.*)

CORPORAL: Well, good-night, Sergeant. It's beastly weather, and beastly work. (*He goes out door in flat.*)
Fall in the escort. [*Exit CORPORAL's two men.*]

SERGEANT (*going back to stove*): It'll be a long, miserable night, this. Has anybody got a deck of cards?

BOBEL: No such bloomin' luck.

O'FLAHERTY: Will annyone shpin us a cuffer?

BOBEL: Look 'ere, Tare-an'-ages, I'll 'ave yer a game at silly-billies.

O'FLAHERTY: Phwat's that?

BOBEL: Why, I hit you on the head with a poker and you laugh.

O'FLAHERTY: An' phwat would I laugh for, whin I should be palin' the hoide aff yez?

PRIVATE GREEN: Boss-eyed Bibby, o' the Rial Scuts, was the biggest fool in Bengal.

BOBEL: Why was he?

GREEN: I suppose he'd growed more than any of the others.

SERGEANT: Dry up, Slinger. Here, Shovels, sing us a song.

BOBEL: What shall it be?

SERGEANT: "When first a soldier."

PRIVATES: Yes, yes!

(*They fetch a form from under window left, and put it before stove right, where BOBEL sat. Three men sit on the form. The SERGEANT stands with back to stove. GREEN and*

O'FLAHERTY *cross over left*. BOBEL *comes down centre with long pipe in right hand.*)

SONG: PRIVATE BEN. BOBEL.

"WHEN FIRST A SOLDIER I WAS MADE."

When first a soldier I was made,
I thought it blooming fine-a ;
I showed my figure on parade,
Oh, my buttons they did shine-a !
But when to battle I was sent,
I didn't feel so cheerly ;
I of my rashness did repent,
I felt so very queerly.

Chorus.

Row, dow, dow, went the thundering drum,
And the fife it played so charming.
Rang, tang, tang, the soldiers come ;
Now wasn't that alarming ?

(While singing chorus, BOBEL pretends to roll drum, then to blow fife, and marches up and down in a burlesque manner. Then GREEN and O'FLAHERTY join in, and march behind him. All turn to front; and run a few short steps forward during third line of chorus. Last time chorus is sung, the other Soldiers join in.)

Sergeant Marrow led the way
To the field to fight-a.
"Face to the left !" I heard him say,
And I faced to the right-a ;
The Sergeant swore, and angry said,
He'd fetch me such a rap-oh !
When a cannon-ball took off his head,
And with it went his cap-oh !

Chorus, &c.

Some heroes are of metal hot,
Their courage there's no snubbing,
They won't be happy till they've got
A belly-ful of drubbing;
And though poor Sergeant Marrow's dead
He still may live in story,
So in the field, without his head,
I left him in his glory.

Chorus, &c.

(During the singing of the chorus the last time the SERGEANT unlocks door left, and exit. As the chorus finishes he rushes back on stage.)

SERGEANT: Guard, turn out! The prisoner has escaped. After her, boys! She can't have got much start. After her!

(The Soldiers run for their rifles and all rush out after SERGEANT through door in flat. Scene darkens during change.)

[SCENE CHANGES.]

SCENE 2.

ROOM IN BROADMAINE HALL. *As in Act I. Stage dark except fire light. On table a decanter of wine, some glasses, and a box of cigars. Enter MARTHA, climbing through window in flat. She wears cavalry cloak, and a man's wide-brimmed felt hat. Her hair is loose. She closes window and comes down right to fire, where she stands.*

MARTHA: Here at last. In the accursed house—in the doomed house. This is where the young man

hatches sin, and the old man works iniquity. This is where both shall draw their wages—at my hand.

(She pulls out revolver and looks at it.)

The wages of sin is death. It is the Master's will.

(She looks round and sees screen.)

I will hide. I must be secret, still, inexorable. Mercy belongs to my Master, and not to me, his messenger.

(She goes behind screen, takes off hat and kneels down, facing audience.)

[Enter WATERS, door in flat. He carries a lamp. Stage lightens. MARTHA is on her knees with hands clasped as if in prayer. WATERS comes down right and places lamp on table.]

WATERS: Drat them colliers, drat them strikes, drat this weather, drat heverythink. No company, no parties, no balls, no blow-outs, no tips, no nothink. Blest if the place ain't duller than a world-without-end-amen little Bethel meetin' 'ouse.

(WATERS puts things in order on table. MARTHA ceases praying and kneels with revolver in her right hand, muzzle on the stage, and a wild fixed stare on her face.)

There. Now, all's ready for Mr. Harthur. Lord, ain't 'e a cheerful sportsman? Lots o' money an' nothink to do, an' can't get a smile out of hisself. Goes about with 'is nose between 'is knees—as 'umpy as 'Amlet. He, he, he! He's the funniest kind of a fool I've struck.

(He goes over and sits on sofa by screen.)

He, he, he. I wish I was in 'is shoes this minute. I'd 'ave an 'igh old time. Lor, lor, lor. Young and rich, and the ball at 'is feet. He, he, he!

'Ow I would kick that ball if I'd Mr. Harthur's boots on. He, he, he! An' 'es that 'umpy 'e don't know where 'e are. An' if there's one man in the 'ole world as I'd like to change places with, Harthur's the man. Heigho! Drat this dismal 'ole.

(Rises and goes up stage, yawning).

If things don't alter I shall send in my resignation.

[Exit door in flat.]

[Enter ARTHUR through Conservatory. He goes to table, pours out a glass of wine, takes up a cigar, but does not light it, and sits down in chair. Sighs. MARTHA turns her eyes in his direction, but does not move.]

MARTHA: He shall have a minute's grace. A breathing space—to repent him.

ARTHUR: What am I to do? What am I to do?

MARTHA: Repent, repent.

ARTHUR: Still vacillating, still drifting: still swearing oaths, and breaking them; still trying myself at the bar of conscience on a charge of scoundrelism, and always pleading guilty.

MARTHA: Guilty.

ARTHUR: I *cannot* leave her. It is her eyes that hold me. The eyes, the eyes.

MARTHA: The eyes. The woman's eyes. Soon he shall see the eyes of God.

ARTHUR: "You could drink her gaze like wine." That wine intoxicates me, maddens me. I am drunk with love.

MARTHA: Love, pretty love. How pleased these fools are with the pretty plaything.

ARTHUR : If I am guilty, is she guiltless ?

“ She should never have looked at me
If she meant I should not love her !
There are plenty—men you call such,
I suppose—she may discover
All her soul to, if she pleases,
And yet leave much as she found them :
But I'm not so—and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round them.”

No. That's an unworthy thought—I have wronged her. Heaven forgive me.

MARTHA : Amen.

(ARTHUR *drinks glass of wine and pours out another, drinks it and refills.*)

ARTHUR : If she *cares* for me—she *does* care for me—*does* she care for me ?

MARTHA (*telling off revolver chambers with her finger*) :
She loves me, loves me not ; loves me, loves me not ;
loves me, loves me not. (MARTHA *continues to count and speak in a whisper.*)

ARTHUR : I cannot give her up. I will not give her up. I will win her if I die for it.

(*He rises.*)

MARTHA : He has spoken his own sentence. Now I will kill him.

(*She is rising when the door opens and enter WATERS.*)

WATERS : Miss Rose Bradshaw.

ARTHUR : Show her in.

MARTHA : She brings him a brief reprieve.

(MARTHA sits down, lays revolver in her lap, begins to plait a tress of her hair, and recites, softly):—

Oh! had I wist, ere I had kist,
That love had been so ill to win,
I'd have locked by heart with a golden key,
And pinned it with a silver pin.

[During recital ROSE enters, she wears a shawl but no bonnet. She stops half-way down stage. She and ARTHUR look at each other silently for a moment.]

ARTHUR: Rose! You—here!

ROSE: I ought not to have come. But there is—
danger.

(MARTHA nods her head twice and listens.)

ARTHUR: Danger? Of what?

MARTHA: Death.

ROSE: Don't ask me. Get a horse. Go away. At once. (She comes nearer.)

ARTHUR: And leave you? No.

ROSE: Don't dally. Your life is hanging by a thread.

MARTHA: He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower.

ARTHUR: You have told me too much, or not enough.

ROSE: I can tell you no more. Go, go, go!

ARTHUR (moving nearer): Rose! Is my peril anything to you?

ROSE: Go! oh—for my sake, go.

ARTHUR: But I don't believe there is any danger, really.

MARTHA: Thou fool! Death's shadow is on thee now.

ROSE: The danger is serious, and immediate. Oh, if you were——

ARTHUR: If I were killed? Would that trouble you, little Rose?

ROSE: Yes. Oh, it would. But hurry, hurry.

MARTHA: Ay, hurry, hurry. Death's wings are swift.

ARTHUR: I will go on one condition.

ROSE: Yes, yes. Be quick.

ARTHUR: I will go if you will go with me.

ROSE: Oh!— Arthur!

(ARTHUR seizes her hands. She struggles feebly.)

ARTHUR: Rose! My darling, listen to me.

ROSE *(faintly, and trying to draw away)*: No, no. Escape, escape. They—you will be—

(She grows faint. ARTHUR seats her in the arm chair by table and takes up glass of wine.)

ARTHUR: My darling! Rose! You are faint, drink this.

(She falls back in chair. He stands and looks at her.)

Rose, Rose, my pale white Rose!

MARTHA: They shall plant white roses on his grave.

ARTHUR: Drink, dearest, drink. *(He gives her wine.)*
Oh, what a blackguard I have been. Now, dear Rose, hold up. Don't be afraid of me. I'm not mad now. *(He kneels beside her, raises her head, and she drinks the wine.)*
So. That is better.

(MARTHA takes revolver and examines chambers. Then wets her right forefinger and waits. ROSE sits up.)

ROSE: It was nothing. A little giddiness.

(She passes her hand over her eyes.)

ARTHUR: Your colour has come back. I frightened you. Can you forgive me?

ROSE: Yes. I forgive you. (ROSE and ARTHUR rise.)

MARTHA: But God will not.

ROSE: You—you will go? (She passes her hand over her eyes, and looks dazed.)

ARTHUR: If you wish it. Yes.

ROSE: Good-bye. Good—bye. (She begins to weep.)

ARTHUR: Rose! Rose! (He takes her by the hands, she droops her head, looks away, then falls sobbing into his arms.)

Rose! You love me.

MARTHA: Love, love. There's but two things holy and of good comfort—love and death. Death—sweet and easeful death. Why not kill them both?

ARTHUR: Rose! You love me.

ROSE: Yes, yes, yes.

ARTHUR: My darling! You will come with me?

ROSE: Don't ask me, Arthur. Don't ask me, love.

ARTHUR: I *must* ask you. I love you. If you love me, come.

ROSE: I do love you. I do, I do.

ARTHUR: Come then. Rosie!

MARTHA:

“Love is more sweet and comelier

Than a dove's throat strained out to sing.”

If she will love him, he shall live.

ROSE: No, no, I dare not. Oh! my father, my father! What have I done? Let me go (she struggles), let me go.

(ARTHUR drops his arms. ROSE runs out through Conservatory door. ARTHUR stands looking after her.)

MARTHA: She has condemned him. He dies.

(ARTHUR turns round to table and takes up wineglass.

MARTHA rises and goes round screen.)

ARTHUR: It was the wine. She is weak and it overcame her. And I took advantage of it. I have sunk so low. Oh, I am unfit to live.

(He puts down glass, and, turning, sees MARTHA. She stands centre of stage, pistol in hand.)

ARTHUR *(aside)*: The mad woman! *(To MARTHA)* Who are you?

MARTHA: I am the Angel of Death.

ARTHUR: What do you want?

MARTHA: I want your life.

ARTHUR: *My* life? Do you know who I am?

MARTHA: You are the man that is to die.

ARTHUR: Tell me your name.

MARTHA: Arthur Grindrod, if you wish to look round you once more, hasten. There are others waiting for me—weary souls who will be glad to die. Hunted, broken-hearted wretches who seek for death as for a hidden treasure, and rejoice exceedingly when they have found a grave. Do you wish to pray?

ARTHUR *(aside)*: If I can gain time. *(To MARTHA)* But how can I know that you *are* the Angel of Death?

MARTHA: You *do* know. Come, prepare. *(Noise heard faintly at a distance.)* What noise is that?

ARTHUR *(aside)*: Help is coming, *(To MARTHA)* Nothing—only the wind.

MARTHA: I rode o' the wind from Heaven to earth. You shall ride o' the wind from earth to Heaven. Now, sinner, look up bravely while I fire.

ARTHUR: Stay! If you are the Angel of Death, give me a sign. Do not use a mortal weapon. Lay your right hand upon my heart and I shall die.

MARTHA: He speaks well. Yes, it shall be so.

(She changes pistol into her left hand.)

ARTHUR *(aside)*: Now. If I can close with her.

(He draws a little nearer. Singing heard at a distance.

THE MARSEILLAISE.)

MARTHA: Hold! What's that?

ARTHUR: Nothing. A song. Come, touch me.

(He draws nearer. Singing is louder.)

MARTHA: Hark! The song, the song. Back, Arthur Grindrod! I remember.

(ARTHUR runs in. MARTHA fires with the left hand. He falls forward upon his face. MARTHA stands looking at him with the pistol in her hand. Singing draws nearer.)

MARTHA: Dust to ashes, ashes to dust. Is it so easy to kill a man? Our children die harder. *(Singing and cheers draw nearer.)* The song. The song!

(MARTHA runs to window, opens it, and waves her hat. Shot heard. MARTHA cries out and staggers back from window, clasping hands over breast.)

CRY WITHOUT: Sowjers! t' Sowjers! t' Sowjers!

MARTHA: This—is—deeath!

[Enter BRADSHAW, door in flat. He sees MARTHA.
MARTHA falls into his arms.]

CROWD *(without)*: Sowjers! Sowjers!

BRADSHAW: Why, it's Martha. They'n shot 'er. Shoo's killed. Killed by 'er own friends.

CROWD *(without)*: Sowjers! Sowjers!

(Noise of running heard off.)

BRADSHAW : Sowjers ! Damn 'em. But we mun gooa.
Coom, my lass.

(He carries MARTHA off.)

[Enter ROSE through Conservatory.]

ROSE *(coming down right)* : I must save him. I heard shots. Mr. Grindrod ! *(She sees him)* Mr. Grindrod ! *(runs to him and kneels down,)* Arthur ! *(She screams ! Then turns him over.)* Help ! help ! *(She drags him across to sofa.)* Oh ! he is killed. He will never speak to me any more. He will never look at me any more. Never any more, never any more. And I might have saved him. He is dead because I would not love him. I have killed him—I. Oh, what was my honour to his life ! *(She drags him partly on to sofa.)* Arthur ! Arthur !

(ARTHUR turns his head, sighs, opens his eyes.)

ARTHUR : Where am I ? A——h !

ROSE : Arthur ! Oh ! he is not dead. Arthur !

[Enter SIR JAS. and Servants at door left. They come down.]

ARTHUR : Rose, my darling, my wife !

(ROSE and ARTHUR embrace.)

SIR JAS. : Arthur ! My boy ! What is this ?

ROSE : They have killed him. I loved him, and he will die.

[SCENE CHANGES.]

SCENE 3.

THE SHED AT BROADMAINE PITS, as in Scene 1.

Discovered:

A Soldier with fixed bayonet each side of door in flat. Another in front of door left. SERGEANT standing in front of stove. Three other SOLDIERS standing up right. MARTHA lying on floor, on her red cloak, left. GEORGE BILLAM kneeling at her head and supporting her. DOCTOR WEEKS kneeling by her right side.

DOCTOR WEEKS (*rising*): She may recover consciousness for a few minutes—before the end. You must try to bear it, Billam. My poor fellow, my heart bleeds for you.

BILLAM: There is no hope?

WEEKS: None. My poor lad, my poor lad. This is sad work. It has been a bitter day.

BILLAM: Is it true that young Grindrod's shot?

WEEKS: Yes, yes. He was wounded by—by a pistol shot.

BILLAM: Not badly, I hope.

WEEKS: No, no; he was stunned, that's all. The bullet struck his watch and glanced away. He was found by Miss Bradshaw, or he might have bled to death.

BILLAM: By Rosie? Where is she?

WEEKS: She is with Mr. Arthur.

BILLAM: With Mr. Arthur!

WEEKS: Yes, there will be a wedding there.

BILLAM (*looking down at MARTHA*): A wedding—a wedding. But what do you mean? Is Mr. Arthur

going to marry Rose? Sir James will never consent to that.

WEEKS: Sir James has consented. Sir James isn't the man he was. He understands now how much harm a good man may do when he listens to his head instead of his heart. He is very sorry now for what has happened; very sorry.

BILLAM: If he would have heard us speak, if he would have reasoned with us, all would have been different. But he thought we were like cattle, and understood nothing but the nosebag and the whip. His sorrow comes too late.

WEEKS: Repentance is never too late.

BILLAM: Repentance is *always* too late.

WEEKS: But, my poor lad, it is our duty to forgive.

BILLAM: Ay. To punish our enemies can only hurt and anger them, without helping or healing us. Revenge adds wrong to wrong.

WEEKS: Very true.

BILLAM: Revenge brings more wrong into the world, but forgiveness takes none out. When a wrong is done it's done for ever, and is as much a part o' the universe as the morning star. Forgiveness does not wipe it out; repentance does not wipe it out.

WEEKS: That sounds hard.

BILLAM: It's true. Drive a nail into a tree, and though you draw it out, the *hole* remains. Cut off my right hand: I may forgive you, but my hand is *gone*. No repentance can make it grow again. Kill my wife and child. I may forgive you. But they are *dead*. And be you ever so repentant, I am a wifeless, childless, broken-hearted man.

WEEKS: My poor lad. But I hope some day you will forgive. The masters have done wrong, but they are sorry. They will do what can be done. The lock-out is over. To-morrow our pits, Grindrod's, Pasker's, and mine, will be opened at the old rates—pending arbitration. Food and fuel will be issued at once. All the prisoners will be released. We shall make what reparation is in our power.

BILLAM: Reparation? Look here.

(MARTHA opens her eyes, sighs.)

WEEKS: Keep quite still. She is conscious. *(He kneels down and offers her water. She turns her head away from the cup.)*

MARTHA: Ahr Lily's nooan thrivin', George. We mun try to get 'er a few days at t' seea side, i' t' spring.

(MARTHA turns her head and sighs.)

I can turn 'er white frock, an' trim it afresh wi' a bit o' pink, and then, wi' a little white sun-bonnet, shoo'l look reight bonny, bless 'er.

(She moans and turns her head.)

My poor lad. Doesn't ta understand? Ahr Lily's deein'. Hearken to 'er breathin', 'ow it gooas fainter an' fainter. Shoo's gooin' aht, slow an' steady, like t' tides o' t' seea.

(She moans again.)

Rose! Don't let them bury me in English ground. Let them burn me up. I loathe the thought of English soil. I couldn't rest in it. You hear me, Rosie? Do you remember that poem—the song of the starving woman? We thought it was too fierce. We didn't understand then, Rosie. Our hearts were too hard. The iron had

not entered into our souls. But now I feel it; now I can speak it. Listen. (*She tries to sit up, GEORGE raises her against his knee. The Soldiers draw near.*)

Mine eyes are blear and dim,
My cheeks all shrunk in,
Weak is each perished limb,
Frail are my hands, and thin.

My brain spins like a wheel,
I lift my palsied hand,
God knoweth what I feel,
I curse my native land.

I curse this land of lust;
I curse it loud and deep;
Where blood must buy a crust,
Where souls are quoted cheap.

Where cultured rantipoles
Of "ladies'" virtues tell,
What time their sisters' souls
Creep shuddering to Hell.

Where thieves old age have banned
From reverence or rest,
Where shame hath laid its hand
Upon the girl-child's breast.

I curse it in my hate,
God smite it, far and wide;
I curse its rotten state,
I curse its filthy pride.

I curse it leaf and bud,
I curse it fruit and seed,
I curse it by the blood
It sheddeth in its greed.

I curse this swinish rout,
God knoweth what I feel ;
Their sins shall find them out—
Round—goes—the giddy—wheel.

(MARTHA falls back into GEORGE'S arms, gives a long moan, a shiver, and lies still. DOCTOR WEEKS kneels down, looks at her, rises, takes off his hat. GEORGE leans over her to kiss her.)

SENTRY (*without*): Halt ! Who comes there ?

A WOMAN'S VOICE (*without*): Friend.

SENTRY (*in a deep strong voice*): Pass, friend. All's well.

CURTAIN.



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